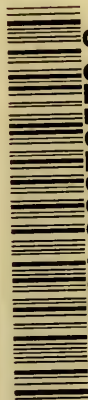


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THE
RETIRED LIEUTENANT,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

LONDON : PRINTED BY JAMES MOYES,
Castle Street, Leicester Square.

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THE

RETIRED LIEUTENANT,

AND THE

BATTLE OF LONCARTY.

Poems:

BY JOHN LAKE,

AUTHOR OF "THE GOLDEN GLOVE," A COMEDY, &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I. & 2.

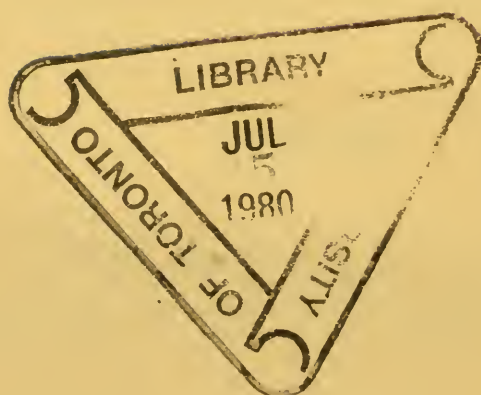
LONDON:

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PREFACE :

WITH BRIEF REMARKS ON SOME OF THE POLITICAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE TIMES ; OCCASIONED BY THE GREAT NEGLECT WHICH POETRY, AND ALL THE OTHER HIGH ARTS, ARE AT PRESENT SUBJECTED TO THROUGH THE AGITATION IN WHICH THE PUBLIC MIND IS CONTINUALLY KEPT BY POLITICAL SPECULATIONS.

ALTHOUGH, in recently publishing a sudden ebullition of poetical *colère*, I was induced to give a brief catalogue of my literary compositions, being here presenting myself, not as a disputant on, but a professor of, the poetic art, it appears necessary that I should again take the liberty of introducing myself to the public as a stranger ; which I beg leave so far to do, as respectfully to state, that, instigated by believing I might be able to add something to the ornamental literature of my country, at a very early age I began to write, and have from time to time composed a variety of works : but the situation in life in which fortune thought fit to place me being somewhat remote from the literary world, and the ways I have tried to get to it full of obstructions, I have never, hitherto, found myself of a temper to persevere in endeavouring to make my way through them. The time, however, is at length arrived when duty to myself binds me to delay no longer in trying my best to get some of my works placed before the public, and that I now do in this first volume of my poems.

I begin the publication with my first production in the shape of a regular poem; though in the order of my writings, as to the time of their composition, it ought to have been preceded by two plays, a comedy and a tragedy; and also many small pieces, the first flutterings of my unfledged muse before she ventured to take wing towards the temple of fame; but as the drama in this country is now under a total eclipse, if not totally extinguished, and the public never read plays unless they are acted, I pass over the plays and small pieces to begin with this poem, which I wrote about the year 1816, as an experiment to prove whether British taste in poetry (which was then running mad) might not still allow a place in its attention to the simple sentimental strains for which English poetry had been long admired: but as, from the reception the piece met with amongst the then publishers of poetry, there appeared to be as much madness on my side as on the side of taste, for proposing such a thing, its effects were never brought to proof; and although, in now presenting it to the public, I know there is no chance for it with general taste, yet, should it meet with any minds pleased to follow it through its simple scenes, to such I dedicate it; while I can assure others that, if they love the thundering of the tempest more than the soft whisper of the zephyr, I have plenty of "spirit-stirring" work to present to them, if they will patiently read on till they come to it.

Yet the sending forth, at the present time, a work commencing with a simple sentimental poem, as this does, with expectation of attention, is, I confess, rather a forlorn hope; England is not now the England it was in the days of Dyer or Goldsmith. Then, with open simplicity of

mind, (the glory of the English character, and always the nursery of talents and mental strength,) Englishmen listened to the strains of the philosophic muse with edification and delight, and our country teemed with great men, and rapidly rose in the scale of nations. But during the last half century a change in our social character has taken place; the age we now live in is the "enlightened age;" our "intellects" have been "marching;" "the schoolmaster is abroad." Instead of public attention being engaged, as wont, by the philosopher, the poet, and the moralist, as they occasionally issued from a dignified press, we now hear of nothing but "Political Economy;" "Diffusion of Useful Knowledge;" "Political Unions;" and "Mechanics' Institutions:" the veriest reptile in literature, who dips his pen in the gall of political contention, and, raging to establish the dogmas of his moon-stricken brain, excites to rapine and blood, rises from his dunghill, and becomes a giant in the arena of public characters; while the poet, who writes to draw men to brotherly kindness, and temper our natures for more exalted being, writes unheeded.

Nevertheless, this is still an "enlightened age:" taste for the exalted kinds of literature, which have ever tended to elevate the nations who cherished them, has forsaken us, and eminent talents in almost all the high arts are fast disappearing: but, what then? we have every coal-porter ready to start as a legislator, and every pavier as a minister of state.

The feats achieved by the "Diffusers of Knowledge" in this way have, indeed, been Herculean: but those philosophers, in the ardour of their philanthropy, in the heat of their desires to improve the condition of society,

seem to have suffered one rather important consideration to escape them ; for, in “ diffusing knowledge ” amongst their pupils, they seem never to have thought of accompanying the same with a “ diffusion ” of sense and understanding.

The “ diffusers ” themselves have, it is to be hoped, sufficient sense to know that “ knowledge ” does not always beget wisdom ; they, doubtless, know that sense, without much “ knowledge,” will enable a man to know knaves and impostors from honest men ; while “ knowledge,” without sense, may render a man who, had he remained ignorant, might have remained honest, both a knave and an impostor.

In the old-fashioned times of poetry I have spoken of, it was written with true philosophy, and read by all the world with delighted acquiescence, that

“ ——— where ignorance is bliss,
’Tis folly to be wise.”

And, therefore, though the waters of knowledge be sweet, and their fountains ought to be thrown open to every human being, that all may drink at them according to their thirst, our day-working “ diffusers ” who seek to force “ knowledge,” as it were by steam, into all heads promiscuously, must not expect extravagant praise for their philanthropy.

Knowledge is immeasurable to human search ; the pursuit of it is a race without a goal. The quaint Sir John Denham says—

“ For why, the wisest of all mortal men
Said he knew naught, but that he naught did know.”

And if one who had reached the greatest extent of knowledge attainable by "mortal man," declared, after all, that he "naught did know," (a truth which every man of real knowledge, even in the extended state of knowledge in the present day, will subscribe to as being his own case,) of what advantage can it be to men depending for subsistence on their industry in labour, to have their attentions tempted from the same by pursuits that the further they advance in the more they will find themselves wanting? Nay, if the famous lines of another great poet be of any value—lines which, for their simple truth, have been for the last hundred years placed in our children's school-books, namely, that

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierean spring :"

the "diffusers," who urge what they call knowledge on persons whose other important callings render it impossible they can "drink deep," must excuse reflecting men if they pronounce them, not philanthropists, but mischievous deceivers.

I am not by this advocating the doctrine that knowledge in the working classes is dangerous, and that men dependent on their labour ought to be kept in ignorance ; I cannot advocate any thing injurious to men of those classes, for I am one of them ; the working classes of the people suffer no hardships that I do not also suffer ; and I derive no benefits from society that I do not, in common with them, earn by my labour. My desire in making these observations is to warn the classes I belong to against the evils of treacherous friendship—against suffering themselves to be the tools of mercenary schemers ; because, of

late times, certain men, whose chief talents lie in their presumption and impudence, have set themselves up as public teachers of the people, by establishing societies and institutions, under specious names, with pretence of affording them useful information and scientific instruction; but, really, to insinuate into their minds the poisons of partisan politics, trusting thereby to secure a superior numerical weight of the people to support their political movements on public occasions, and thus promote their own advancement to offices of gain; the real good of the tools who may so choose to serve them being the remotest consideration in their thoughts.

But, on the presumption of such men setting themselves up as teachers of the people, and drawing working men from their industry, to vitiate and demoralise their minds with political cabals, without there being the smallest possible chance of such studies ever doing them any good, while the vile mercenary purposes for which they do so are so prominently visible, no observing man can look without disgust. Thanks to the truly benevolent portions of the community, the poorest of the people may now obtain the inestimable acquirement of being able to read and write their own language, and those invaluable keys to the temple of knowledge being placed in all hands, all who find that knowledge in any art or science might be useful to them, may easily obtain it, pure from its fountains, with the honour of having gained it by their own efforts, and without the contamination of partisan politics.

But this mock "diffusion of knowledge" is only one of the many levers that assist in moving the machinery now employed in disturbing the peace and distracting the

energies of this great country ; the grand battering-ram itself is the cry of " Reform ; " and shaken as the organisation of the state thereby already is, strange to say, that, too, is only a mockery of the people.

It has been said that nations may be ruled by names and epithets ; and certainly the power of a name or epithet, however falsely applied, is often wonderful. By the word " Reform," simple, common-sense people suppose that improvement is meant ; that a bettering of things is proposed ; that some evil is to be removed ; some corruption cleansed away ; some vice to be abated ; and, consequently, when the cry of " Reform of Parliament " was sounded through the kingdom, the good people of England, who always were in trouble, and always will be, yielding easy confidence to the orators who trumpeted the cry forth, and convinced that immeasurable benefits would result to them therefrom, all simultaneously issued from their shops and warehouses, and never ceased calling out " Reform ! " " Reform ! " till they so terrified the weaklings then in the councils and senate of the nation by their yells, that, to pacify them, they left all to their mercy, and got out of the way, glad to save their ears in the scramble.

The good people then quickly got " Reform of Parliament," in all the plenitude their orators desired ; or, if not so, it was the fault of the orators themselves, for they had all the old timbers of the constitution relating to parliament, which our careful forefathers took such pains in clamping and dovetailing together to keep out the vermin of their time, unscrewed and laid open before them ; and now let us see what this " Reform," so loudly called for, and so vigorously applied to parliament by its advocates, has really produced.

It was expected, as has been said, to “ better things ;” “ to remove evils ;” “ to cleanse away corruptions ;” and “ abate vices :” but, looking first at the component parts of the assembly it was applied to,—namely, at the persons who constitute the same,—we find that, instead of bettering things, it has driven from it men of experienced judgment, talents, and honour, and replaced them by visionary libertines, ruffian bravoës, and beggarly speculators ; that, instead of having “ removed the evil ” of influence in elections, it has only abridged that power in one class of persons, and enlarged it to another, who are greedily practising it through the meanest artifices, even to the extent of barefaced perjury and fraud ; that instead of having “ cleansed ” that assembly from bribery and corruption, it has only produced occasion to excite the same in greater rankness ; that instead of “ abating the vice ” of lavishing the people’s money on friends and favourites, it has caused a continual creation of new offices and employments to feed a new flight of hungry adherents, at the public expense, ever since it came into operation.

So much for the first application to our institutions of what the *illuminati* of our age call “ Reform :” and thus the term Reform—a term which, in its true sense, denotes regeneration from evil, restoration to virtue, and the purification of men’s hearts from their vices — has, amongst us, been perverted to express a mere political movement, a change in the agents of power ; under the action of which the basest vices of the human heart have been heated to greater rankness—public virtue deeply demoralised—and not one substantial good realised to the people.

With those facts standing broadly forth before them,

as they already clearly do, it might be expected the people would open their eyes to the deceptions practised on them, and cease to yield themselves the slaves of mercenary adventurers: but the complaint made of old against the people of another nation might now, it would seem, be justly revived against the people of this, namely, that they “have eyes, but see not; and ears, but do not hear;” for their “patriots,” without shame at the exposure of the national mockery of their “Parliamentary Reform,” as to rendering Parliament more honest and upright than it has hitherto been, are still continuing their schemes for power by proposing new changes which they call “Reform,” and the people are still continuing to yield themselves the blind instruments of their speculations.

I have already said I am one of the “people,” one of the class that now exclusively claim to be so denominated; and, therefore, trusting it will be evident that I can have no interest or object to induce me to advance opinions with design to mislead or deceive them, I expect they will duly weigh the above observations, and, for the pacification of the country, and the good of trade, by which we all live, be induced to moderate their ardour in pursuing the political deceptions now conjuring up before them, and refrain from giving their valuable time and hard-earned pence to support the political quacks and parliamentary mendicants who are on all sides besetting them, and this advice I leave them to ponder over.

To the heads and leaders in the above transactions, the “patriots” themselves, I now address myself; and, supposing them possessed of the discernment, to be aware that there is a vast body of the British nation who clearly see, under all their pretended patriotism, their true motives

of action ; to them I beg leave to say, that, though I allow office and power, with the importance, patronage, and emolument, too, that accompany the same, to be very desirable matters ; still, with the sense of probity, and what constitutes consistency of character, that my humble rearing has given me, I declare I am, beyond measure, astonished and surprised to see gentlemen, men born to rank and property, men of education, and accustomed to good society, and who, in the ordinary affairs of life, would be ashamed to do any thing openly dishonourable (which we are called on to believe most of the men now holding the chief offices of government are),—I say I am astonished that such men are found capable of having recourse to the low, the base, the utterly dishonourable artifices, impostures, and deceptions, which they, of late, practised in the face of the country to get into office, and still continue practising to keep the same. Were they the low-born desperate adventurers that some of their adherents are, mere political brigands, watching to enter into any scheme to cast loose the property of the country, that they might have a chance of sharing in a new division of its spoil, such conduct would create no surprise ; but in gentlemen of station, in whom susceptibility of shame might be expected, such conduct is unaccountable.

But, setting aside scheming and tricking in regard to office, in the arts of which some of the right honourables now in power must certainly have taken lessons from their valets ; setting aside, too, the criminality of conspiring, by sinking the constituency of the kingdom, to give an overbearing character to the House of Commons, to the overawing or subverting the freedom of the other two branches of the constitution (which is clearly the intent and object

of all their reforms); setting aside the dishonourableness of the one, and the guilt of the other; and granting that it is not thirst for power, and the advantages of office that urges them on in their course, but the pure conscientious patriotism and desire of the people's welfare that they pretend to;—allowing all this, I say, the charge against them for proceeding as they are doing is only shifted from want of honesty to want of judgment; from designing villany, to egregious blindness and folly; for if ever the House of Commons be so constituted as to over-rule the king and the aristocracy, this kingdom, by whatever title it may be designated, becomes a republic; and if there are men in the present day who have studied and learned history, who, having the experience of the world before them, and the result of the various modes into which civil society has been formed in the different ages and countries of it, are yet of opinion that republican government, or popular supremacy, is the most salutary government for a nation, such men are much below par with their stablemen and chambermaids in comprehending the results of experience in their professions.

“The people's supremacy,” “the people's taking the management of their affairs into their own hands,” is the constant bark of our present leaders in “reforming,” and all the yelpers to their pack; in all their public assemblies they are ever appealing, with deceptive sycophancy, to a Dagon, to which they give the name of “the people;” in their public entertainments their carousals are led by toasting “the people!” “the true source of all legitimate power, the people!” as if the people did not know, without them, that they are the true source of all power, legitimate or not. But some of “the people” know more;

know that the "legitimate power" of which they are "the true source," is, in them, like to what it is in an almost equally noble animal who has much more, namely, the horse, of no value to him without the rein ; on the contrary, that he may, with all "the true sources of" his "legitimate power" about him, be, by the braying of an ass, driven from control, and hurried to destroy himself on the first object that obstructs his course ; and, if solid common sense do not prevent, "the true source of all legitimate power" amongst us is now in some danger of the same result from the same agency. Yet it is worthy of remark that, as the most daring depredators often feel compunctions, and tremble for the consequences of their assaults on the laws, so our present champions of "Reform," while they are heating the nation by inflammatory sophisms in politics almost to ignition, are imploring the people to "judge *soberly* and *deliberately* ;" "to promote and forward the great principle of reform *temperately* and *cautiously* ;" "to improve the institutions of the country *carefully* and *wisely* ;" * as if the waves of the excited ocean, or the bursting of a volcano or earthquake, were not as likely to be counselled to move "temperately" and "cautiously," as were the Bristol rioters, or the Parisian rabble who brought Louis the Sixteenth from Marseilles to the scaffold, and, throwing open their "true sources of all legitimate power," steeped Europe, for a quarter of a century, in blood and mourning.

But our political alchemists think it quite unfair to charge their doctrines about "the supremacy of the people," as leading to such extremities ; they think that,

* See Lord John Russell's speech at Bristol.

if things were but left to them, they could keep *a tap* on "the true source of all legitimate power," as on a beer-cask, and turn it off and on when they wanted it. In short, still dreaming over their schoolboy lessons in Greek and Roman history about popular liberty, without reflecting on its results even to those nations; with their "eyes in fine frenzy rolling from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth," after the phantoms poets have dressed up in the all-loved name of liberty, and wanting in the statesman-like solidity of judgment as to that proportionate distribution of liberty amongst the members of a community that renders liberty truly valuable; they are of opinion that democracy is the most natural, the most wise, the most philosophical, and most happy for the human race, of all governments; and many of the visionary sophists who think thus, with the Paria curs who are supporting them, and ready to support any thing that would create disturbance, are now champing the curbs of the law to break down this solid and long-tried monarchy to republicanism; which being the case, I am almost tempted to enter a little into the true nature of republican government: but, as I am here merely glancing at passing events, and giving a few cursory hints on subjects that the occasion I write for does not call on me further to enter on, I shall only now, to illustrate a little the operations of popular supremacy in the government of nations, briefly allude to the instances of it that have lately been, and are still before our eyes.

France has lately been a republic; and has given the modern world a full display of the frenzied exercise of popular power, and consequent restless and ruinous state of change that so often distracted the early nations who

were subject to it; of the ferocity, tyranny, robberies, and murders, that ever accompany unbridled democracy. And she has, too, since then, worn the galling chains of unmitigated despotism which ever succeed to popular licentiousness. Is this a precedent to induce wise men to promote a preponderance of democratic power in this country?

America is now a republic: but “look on this picture and look on that!” look on Great Britain, and look on America! America may have no pale artisans out of employment — she may have no beggars — her vast fields may long load the tables of her seedling population with abundance, and that population may roam her interminable savannas as free as their wild buffaloes or antelopes; their only restraint, satiety of freedom — their only legislator, the rifle; while her Congress at Washington, in their mealy coats and leathern aprons, may roam equally free in the mental savannas of interminable speech, and go back to their shops to feed, drink, and vegetate, in the same meal and leather they left them in: the mark of rank and distinction, that rouses the aspiring mind to magnanimous effort, and holds up the glass of refinement to society, is not seen there. America, at present, is no more than one common grazing field for all kinds of animals to brouse in together on an equal level; each species freely enjoying the inclinations of their own wild natures, and feeding alike on the soil that produced them; and, till America shall doff the republican cap, and divide her people into orders and classes, and distinguish those classes by honours, titles, and power, in the state, too, either as a reward for past, or obtainable by future merit, she will never begin to rise to be a really great and civilised nation.

There are Americans who feel this ; who, looking at the splendour of England, in her famous kings, and long lines of nobility, and the softness it spreads through all the descending grades of society, even down to the talented artisan, to exchange reciprocal homage with each other ; and, at once proud that it is the land of their ancestors, and ashamed of their crimes against it, yet fondly call it “ Home ! ” Hail to such hearts ! all true Britons will ever embrace them as brothers.

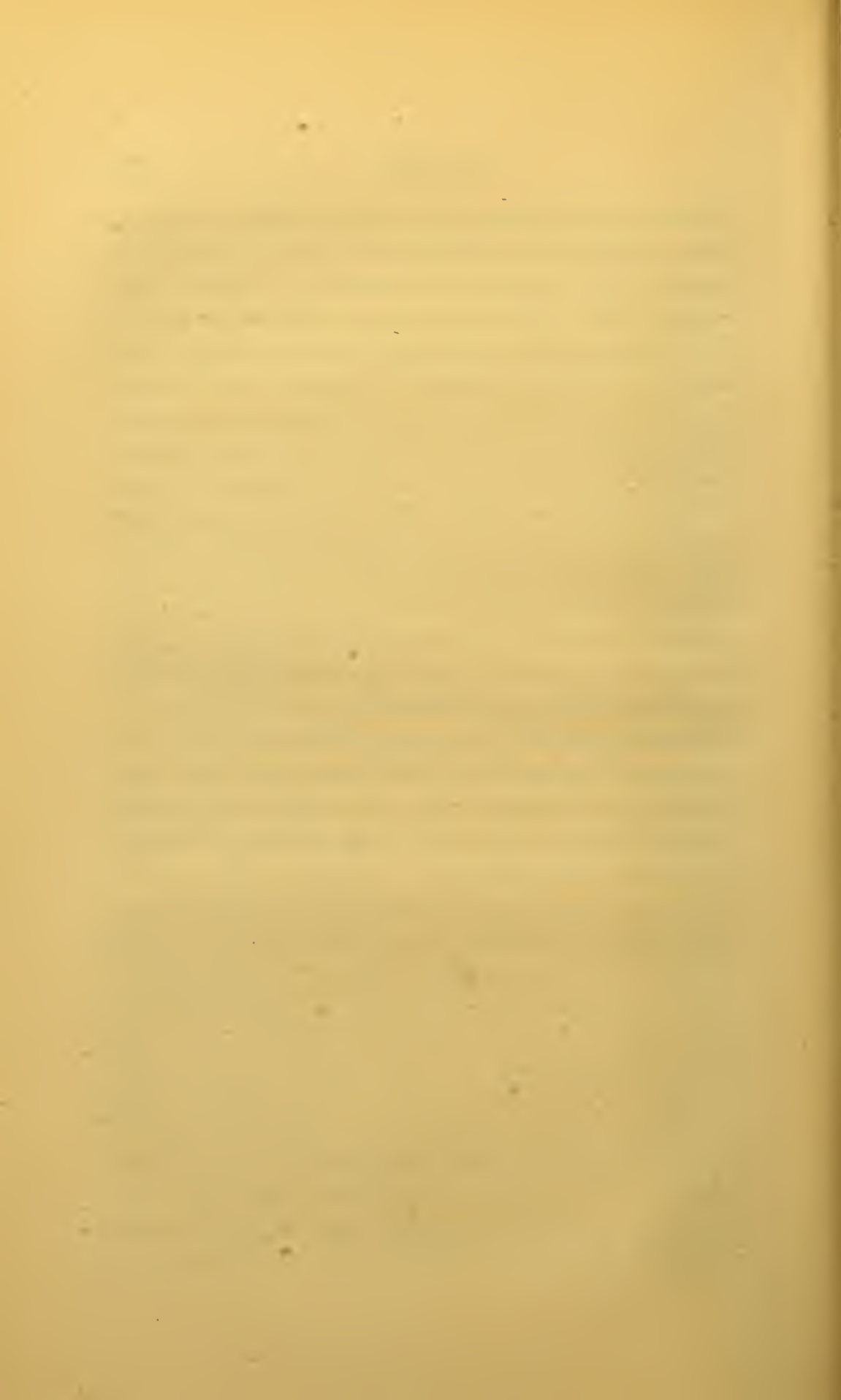
I have not, in the above glance at the present state of America, pointed out the dark shades that have been impressed on the people’s morals and manners by the influence of brute republicanism : I wish not to speak harshly of Americans ; they are, with all their faults against us, still children of the British family ; and, though, with the mental Atlantic of painful reflections that lie between us and them, there is now no chance of their returning, like the prodigal son, penitent to their father’s house, history, to all futurity, will only hold them as a scion of the British line, and will mark every hostile demonstration they may make against their parent state as a dereliction from moral rectitude. Yes ! America now lies like a formless block of granite, detached by a tempest from the mountain on which it grew, inheriting, indeed, the original grain and substance of the mother rock, but powerless to move to relieve itself from the deformities it fell with, however unseemly and detrimental. And there are Americans who see this, and grieve for their country.

Is, then, America a model to be instanced for breaking down the British constitution to democracy ? and what presumptuous traitor shall dare to lift the hell-forged mallet of seditious agitation against her time and prosperity-sanctioned institutions with such a purpose ?

That from the changes of circumstances produced by time, changes in the *practical* laws of the kingdom may occasionally become necessary, every man of sense knows, and is always ready to acknowledge; but to conspire to alter *the primary powers of the constitution*, by the deliberate and free exercise of all the parts of which changes in the laws, to benefit all the interests of the country, can, with any pretence to wisdom, be made; to attempt to give to any of the branches of that body, either king, lords, or commons, a power to coerce the other, is treason! and let those who are now labouring to create a power in the House of Commons, to overawe the other two powers of the state, take heed what they are about, for if they do so, to make a wreck of the constitution, assuredly a day of terrible retribution will come.

I may appear to some to have gone out of my course, as a poet introducing his verses to the public, in thus entering into the political conflicts of the day; but, having long waited quietly for a season of public tranquillity to attempt the publication of my verses in, and suffered patiently, with hundreds of others, the heavy loss which students of the peaceful arts are all now more or less subjected to, without seeing any harbinger of peace, but rather the sword whetting for new battles, I have resolved to delay no longer in seeking with my humble strains the ears of the superior few, whose minds rise above the frenzy of the hour, and desire the lasting pleasures inspired by sentimental or patriotic song. And being, at the same time, perfectly convinced that the agitations which now shake the kingdom, without the possibility of ever in any shape benefiting it, are doing all its immediate interests deep and serious injury,—in presenting myself as a national writer, which, in publishing poetry, I do, I

hold it a duty I owe to my country to declare loudly my dissent from those agitations, and to do my utmost to expose to my countrymen the mercenary designs, or the egregious folly, of the men who promote them. And if the champions of those agitations, the day-working "Reformers" of all but themselves, who are now maudling the public understanding with their philosophisms in legislature, continue to go on in their present course, there is danger of my being tempted to pay my respects to some amongst them in words that shall stick faster to them than any thing here is likely to do, because they may be laid on closer. Poets are a privileged class, and they hold their privileges with a security that mocks at the chaff of the sacrilegious innovator : for, though they do not now occupy the important station in states that of old enabled them to go between the camps of contending armies, and reprove transgressing chiefs with safety, if they have the true warrant of Parnassus, they still possess the power that obtained them that high office ; they carry darts, that he who provokes their resentment being pierced by, becomes a Vampire never to die.



THE
RETIRED LIEUTENANT.

LET poets, more adventurous, wing
The Epic's giddy heights, and sing
The dire combustions oft that flow
From human pride and human wo ;
A simpler theme my strains advise,
I sing Lieutenant Halbert Guise.

Guise, born to arms, in early youth
Had lent the king his sword and truth,
And oft with chiefs of mighty name
Fought, side by side, the field of fame.
He, with the love of glory fir'd,
In service hard had long aspir'd
To rank in arms ; but, tale of wo !
Time travell'd fast, promotion slow ;

And, worn by the events of war,
By age, and many an honour'd scar ;
Yet only boasting in degree
A senior Lieutenancy,
Brave Halbert, broken every way,
Retir'd upon his broken pay.

No more could dreams of glory lead
The hero to the daring deed ;
No further ev'n the thirst of fame
Could stimulate the shatter'd frame ;
That latest fire that warms the breast
Had sunk in nature's calls for rest.

The veteran settled his abode
Near Walford, on the northern road ;
A boroughmote renown'd, 'tis said,
For loyalty, good ale, and trade ;
Whether his place of birth or no,
Our documents omit to shew.
But here, at last, evincing still
His soldiership and warlike skill,
Flank'd by a wood and waterway,
To shift no more, his quarters lay.

A pleasing spot ; the road was near
In front, an orchard clos'd the rear ;
And fenc'd by ancient thorns around,
Which here and there the elder crown'd ;
A garden, furnish'd to afford
Pastime, and viands for the board,
Behind ; and gaily stretch'd before
A pleasure lawn to cheer the door ;
With gravel paths that cross'd the green,
With stuccoed walls, and casements clean,
And needful offices around,
The smiling scene the cottage crown'd.

With its appendages, the place
Might occupy an acre's space ;
For Halbert, all his battles o'er,
Had conquer'd of the world no more.
Small territory ! but, alas !
Great Cæsar now inherits less ;
And he who lords earth's widest feu
Will, one day, find a less will do.

Here did the warrior propose
His musters with this world to close ;

And turn in mind what he could do
To fit him for the great review,
When all the armies of the earth,
Whate'er their nations, tongues, or birth,
Shall strike this scene of earthly things,
And march to meet the King of Kings.

Here, too, he look'd to find a friend
With whom, as life drew near its end,
He might, its visionary scene
Reviewing, talk what he had been :
Tell o'er his feats, warm with the strain,
Forget, and tell them o'er again ;
And, rapt in the heroic rage,
Forget the while his wounds and age.
And who disdains to lend his ear
The son of danger's tale to hear ?
And he who social joy foregoes
To meet in arms his country's foes,
Or braves the earth-involving main
For science, or his country's gain,
Has tales to tell, events has seen
Which pleasure's minions little ween.

Here Halbert fondly look'd to find
A friend of parity of mind ;
A friend who might sincerely share
His social pleasures or his care ;
A friend for worse or better true,
Which many find so hard to do :
For those whom duty's stern commands
Exile to range in foreign lands,
Brave peril's front, forego their ease,
Sustain'd by buoyant hopes like these —
By cheering hope, where'er they roam,
At last to find a friend and home.

Halbert, in battles bravely fought,
Had won the means his cottage bought ;
But all the gallant veteran's stay
Beyond his dwelling, was his pay ;
His pay, which now, abatements clear,
Remain'd some fifty pounds a year.
Small stipend ! to support the claims
Of age and honourable maims —
Poor meed, a life to cheer at last
In perils for the public pass'd ;

Thrift of the state in feeble hour !
But Halbert never carp'd at power :
And when he heard, as who can stay
His ears ? the clamours of his day,
Heard raging politicians rail
At evils in the commonweal,
And talk of power and trust abus'd ;
He'd answer, while a blush suffus'd
His war-worn countenance, 'Tis true !
Men high in power have much to do :
For me, I've serv'd the state in naught
But as my truth and duty taught ;
Given but my king his right in me
To guard his crown's integrity :
And small though be my fortunes here,
Yet honour shall attend my bier ;
At fortune's stern but dastards whine,
It blurs a soldier to repine.

Thus Halbert discontents reprov'd,
While he, by nobler feelings mov'd,
Did what he could with honour do
To aid his slender revenue.

Sometimes his skill in angling tried,
The neighbouring river aid supplied ;
Sometimes the moor a tribute dun,
For who forbids the soldier's gun ?
But chief his garden, whence his spade,
A weapon royalty has sway'd,
Brought him supplies of viands sound
Almost the circling seasons round ;
And there Bellona's hardy son,
Yet constant to the morning gun,
Athletic, though at sixty-three,
You oft might in his trenches see :
For now, the proud embattl'd field
Forgot, his grounds the warrior till'd,
As, ere frivolity had birth,
Did the great fathers of the earth ;
Ere sovereign power requir'd the aid
Of splendour, pageant, and parade,
Did mighty chiefs, whose sovereign sway
Resum'd, might bid the world obey ;

A female, blanch'd by age and cares,
Manag'd the veteran's house affairs ;

And in its neatness you might trace
Her qualities to fill the place ;
But for precision, and a gift
At marketing, and household thrift,
No wife or maid in Walford town
Might challenge place of Margaret Brown.
'Tis sure all housewifery she knew ;
Could pickle, salt, preserve, and brew ;
Tell quantities without the book,
Get linen neatly up, and cook ;
Comfort at slender cost induce,
And turn small things to weighty use.
Hail ! homely virtues ! so the mind
Intent to benefit its kind,
Observes the mighty in the small,
And gathers good from all to all :
So marks the muse, with fond essay,
The moral of her simple lay ;
Ambitious if she might conduce
As well to profit as amuse ;
Full vain if like event might crown
Her cares and those of Margaret Brown ;
For Margaret in her small essays
Deserv'd, and found, an honest praise.

Yet often to his social guest
The warrior Margaret's worth confess'd.
When prais'd at board his frugal meal,
Or complimented on his ale,
My commissary, he would say,
In his jocose and social way,
If merit were the mark of rate,
Ere this had worn an epaulet ;
She knows to forage for, or dress
The rations of a soldier's mess,
Can cure her stores, her liquors fine,
With any sutler in the line.
And truth it was, she every way
So selvag'd out her master's pay,
And with such luck her thrift was crown'd,
That at his board the veteran found
Of wholesome fare, and frugal cheer,
No stint or stoppage all the year.

When thus the hero of our theme
To Walford quarters came to claim,
That he by any in or near
The town was known does not appear.

But nature, Halbert's warmest friend,
Had in his person's mould ordain'd
That no where he with ease might shun
The curious eye, or live unknown :
His height six feet, by martial guage,
That portliness that graces age,
His manly countenance and mien,
His gold and scarlet always clean,
Hat cock'd to regulation true,
White hair, and military queue,
Had all accorded to secure
Him from a destiny obscure.
And here, the gate which to the road
Open'd from his serene abode,
Soon gave him, on the market days,
And Sundays, to the public gaze.

And from the first 'twas Halbert's whim,
Complete in military trim,
Upon his cottage esplanade
To make his Sunday morn's parade,
Marshal his mind, and taste the air,
As went the borough chime for prayer.

And there, as thus he pac'd his green,
By all the Walford people seen
In passing to the church below,
Soon by the hat and rustic bow
Remark and homage was express'd,
And ne'er by his neglect repress'd.

Again, as duly would return
The lively weekly market morn,
When sylvan dames, with thrift and thought,
To town their wares and daughters brought,
And throngs in Walford street, elate
With trade, and talk, and friendship, met ;
Halbert, in forage order clean,
Would o'er his gate familiar lean ;
And, pleas'd himself when he could please,
Would price the butter, eggs, and cheese ;
Talk of the crops, the rise and fall
Of grains ; and oft, though funds were small,
Judging their honour by his own,
Would buy, and never bate them down.

Thus far and near of Halbert ran
Report ; and, his affairs to scan,

A great and universal buzz
Amongst the Walford gossips rose.
'Tis not in our records set down
Precise how much it cost the town ;
What works, what wares of every sort,
What ells of stuffs and camblets, short
Of wonted tale, in Walford's trade,
Our warrior's first appearance made ;
But many a shuttle, sledge, and mill,
Hours when they should have mov'd stood still.
Nor was the stir that mov'd the town
Confin'd to labour's race alone ;
The borough heads could not conceal
The passion ; nay, the more genteel
Forbore not asking whence, and who
Our hero was : but no one knew.
While he, adjusting his affairs,
And busied in prudential cares
To square his means, his plans to lay
Fairly to meet the future day,
Employ'd, or in his grounds or cot,
Nor sought nor shunn'd the public note,
Nor dream'd that he remark had found
Of any past an acre round.

Thus took our warrior up his lone
Encampment, all at first unknown :
But deem not that he long remained
At Walford town without a friend.
No dark misanthropy of mind
Had barr'd his bosom to his kind,
No sour disgust, or sullen pride,
The yearnings of his heart had dried ;
But open stood his nature all
To worthy friendship's social call ;
And by the rule all nature through,
As well of mind as matter true,
That like to likeness ever tends,
Soon found he 'mongst his neighbours friends.

The wide-extended fields that join'd
Our hero's orchard fence behind,
Were held by Adam Goss, a warm
Substantial yeoman near, in farm.
A yeoman of the early breed
Was trusty Adam, plain indeed,
But such as, ere the hardy race
Refinement sought, were England's grace ;

Ere pride adventur'd to invade
The manners of the sylvan shade,
Were found the strong and trusty stand
Of a content and prosperous land.

The farmer was in person plain ;
Nor might at first his manners gain
On minds whose estimate begin
Without ; he was the man within :
All sound untainted English stuff
Plain, generous, sincere, and rough ;
Strong for his privileges, true
To freedom's rights, but loyal too ;
He loved the news, discuss'd the laws,
But saw their worth, as well as flaws :
In fine, in Goss to truth was drawn
A bold and honest Englishman.

Now, as the farmer took his rounds
In survey of his grain and grounds,
And Halbert reconnoiter'd too,
They sometimes pass'd in mutual view ;
And, moved by the kindly law
That fellow-souls together draw,

When thus their walks adjacent lay,
They socially exchanged, Good day ;
Words grew from words, discourse increas'd,
Their kindred natures stood confess'd :
And rising by gradations true,
They into full acquaintance grew :
The farmer scarcely miss'd a day
To call with something new to say ;
And well his part the veteran bore,
For he of marvellous tales had store.

But ere 'twas long, while thus engaged,
They were in talk, the sky presag'd
A sudden storm ; thick over head
The clouds in mantling masses spread ;
Wild fleaks of lightning seem'd to sere
The fields, and thunder rent the air ;
And, bursting from the sky obscure,
A flood of rain began to pour :
When Guise, his sheltering cot to share,
Besought the swain, with gallant air ;
And, pleas'd at an event which wrought
Towards the friendship which he sought,

As well as glad to shun the blast,
The farmer gaily thither pass'd.

'Twas late in autumn, and the year
Was cold, the hearth and fire were clear,
And grave assiduous Margaret, who
The farmer's worth and opulence knew,
Made haste upon the board to place
The ale and cheese, the house to grace ;
And farmer Goss, with court'sey due,
Partook the fare and prais'd it too.

But if his thus discovered friend
From first, of Goss, regard had gain'd ;
In his retirement him to view,
Regard to veneration grew :
For to behold him plac'd among
His arms, which round in order hung,
His form and aspect, which defin'd
Resistless power, with valour join'd ;
Might well the eye, unwont to trace
Such presences, with awe impress.
But there jocosely o'er their ale
The friends resum'd their broken tale :

And still by topics new constrain'd,
The yeoman bold with Guise remain'd
Till both forgot the passing shower,
And fast drew on the dinner hour.

At length his calling glanc'd across
His memory, and the farmer rose :
And now you've shewn your courtesy,
Allow, he cried, like chance to me ;
To-morrow, if the day be fine,
You at the farm with us shall dine ;
Dame Goss, my wife, is frank and kind,
Though not what fashion calls refin'd ;
My little ones are rough and rude,
Though oft the parson calls them good ;
But come ! at least our hearts are warm,
You'll dine to-morrow at the farm.

My friend, the veteran, smiling, cried,
Demands so kind are ill denied ;
But if your court'sy thus I share,
Scarce will my presence pay your care.
Pshaw ! cried the swain : and by the hand
The veteran shook, with aspect bland,

We shall be proud to see you store
Our board; then strode towards the door,
Naming again the coming day;
And o'er the upland took his way.

Brave Guise, ere this, had much subdu'd
That loathing strong of solitude,
That love with stir to be combin'd,
Which marks the soldier's active mind;
And with his fate and fortunes lone
Had nobly to contentment grown;
Yet, thus to be a day releas'd
From languid stillness, he was pleas'd;
At thoughts again with life to blend,
He felt his latent powers distend.

He was on foot at early morn,
The garden was that day forborne;
And Margaret Brown, enliven'd too,
With breakfast to the hour was true.
And that, and preparations o'er,
Near drew at length the dinner hour;
When issued forth, with looks serene,
Brave Guise in all his orders clean;

And, passing his encampment's rear,
Arm'd with his staff, he to the farm drew near.

Warm in a vale with culture gay
The patriarchal dwelling lay ;
Its hoary roof, with tufts of moss
Enamell'd, rose, and scarcely rose,
O'er piles of corn, and heaps profound
Of rural stores that hemm'd it round :
Whence barns surcharg'd with winnow'd grains,
Stalls, stables, sties, and copious pens,
Rang'd o'er the miry basements, rear
Their russet copes ; and to the ear
The lowing ox, the porker's growl,
The screaming goose, and cackling fowl,
And neighing steed, in various quire,
Proclaim'd the rustic burgh entire.

Amus'd with the unwont survey
Guise slowly thither bent his way :
But thus, while, inly entertain'd,
He viewed the fortress of his friend,
A shape appear'd in motion near
Which filled him, first, perhaps, with fear :

A mighty bull, in browsing nigh,
Had on his scarlets fix'd his eye ;
(For oft the species cannot view
Unchaf'd that strong impressive hue),
And when the meadow's monarch saw
Our hero near his empire draw,
Arous'd to rage and fury dread,
He, spurning earth, towards him made.

Terrific came the monster on,
And chance to scape him there was none :
But Guise, collected, calm, and cool,
From study long in danger's school,
Was straight resolv'd ; and for the shock
Grasp'd firm his trusty staff of oak ;
A footing sure and solid chose,
And thus stood fix'd till he was close ;
When, bounding from his course aside,
His truncheon so he backward plied
Upon his heels, that, bruis'd and craz'd,
His floundering hinder quarters raz'd
The grass ; and, writhing with his pain,
He gor'd the ground and roar'd amain.

And now, had Halbert's nature borne
His back upon a foe to turn,
He of his gall'd assailant might
Have shunn'd the farther rage by flight :
But, rous'd, the hero felt again
The fires with which, 'mid heaps of slain,
He oft had through the battle burn'd,
And at inglorious flight he spurn'd ;
Calmly his raging foe review'd,
And waited the attack renew'd.

And short the truce he thus obtain'd,
For straight the bull his powers regain'd ;
And, to instinctive nature true,
Again at Guise he fiercely flew.
But, from his punishment, his course
Was so abridg'd, and fallen his force,
That Halbert, moving round him, saw
Occasion apt, and on his jaw,
Beside the spreading nostril, laid
His ringing shaft with force so dread,
That at the shock, from anguish fell,
His bellowing rung through all the vale.

Yet oft, alas ! events of wo
E'en out of noblest actions grow :
For with such fury Halbert drew
The stroke, that short in pieces flew
His staff, and to the monster's feud,
Without defence, expos'd he stood.
And now, as mourn'd Doarthon, long
Renown'd for deeds of arms in song,
His fields of fame and triumphs o'er,
Was slain, inglorious, by a boar,
So gallant Guise, of honours full,
Seem'd doom'd to fall by Goss's bull ;
For still the beast, though wrung with pain,
Was mustering to the charge again.

But Mars and fate had not ordain'd
For Halbert that ignoble end ;
For thus while fate suspended hung,
A mastiff through the meadow sprung,
And pinn'd the bull, with bite profound,
Fast by the muzzle to the ground ;
And farmer Goss, at whose command
The dog advanc'd, appear'd at hand,

Arm'd with a stake and loaded gun ;
And, as he thus came labouring on,
He bawl'd, with voice that rent the sky,
That Bashan should that instant die ;
For such denomination bore
The bull, the choicest of his store.

To view the farmer's gestures wild,
At first the hardy veteran smil'd ;
But, fearful of a tragic scene,
Advanc'd the beast and him between,
And cried, Well said ! be justice done ;
But mine the wrong ! be mine the gun.
'Tis yours ! my friend, cried Goss, to you
I own his doom the more is due :
When Halbert took the piece with care,
And its contents discharg'd in air.
And now, cried he, I pray thee, haste
And summons from the noble beast
Your dog ; all odds with us are even,
If Bashan be for this forgiven :
If to such freaks he be inur'd,
'Twere well, indeed, he were secured ;

But let him be for this excused.
When Goss replied, with shame suffus'd,
Dear friend, your mercy is to blame,
His death it is your right to claim ;
Yet he is wont to be so mild —
He would not injure e'en a child.
But, changing to a smile, I've guess'd,
Continued Goss, what vex'd the beast ;
It was your scarlets ! had you doff'd
Your coat, the farmer said, and laugh'd,
You would have found his fury cease,
And he'd have lick'd your hand in peace.

So ! laughing too, brave Guise replied,
For once, it seems, my calling's pride
Has almost wrought its own defeat ;
But next when I and Bashan meet,
Rather than break the public peace,
My colours duly shall give place :
A homage which I would not do,
Content, to Christian, Turk, or Jew.
Which said, his dog, with whistle shrill,
The farmer summon'd from the bull ;

And on his brawny haunch and side,
His ponderous stake so vengeful plied,
That Bashan, grumbling, from them spurn'd
The field, and to his feed returned.

Now merry o'er the late alarm,
The friends advanc'd and gain'd the farm,
Where Mrs. Goss, who had with fright
And pain observ'd the dangerous fight,
Met Halbert with a welcome kind,
In which her household mildly join'd :
While all her ruddy infant train,
Which scarce she could to rule restrain,
Mov'd round, behind, the guest to see,
Some shy, some innocently free,
And some who ecstasies express'd
Not by her frowns to be repress'd.
But Halbert, in whose bosom drew
All nature's strings with impulse true,
As he their names and sex defin'd,
To each, in turn, said something kind ;
Till grown, from his attentions, bold,
And, as in his acquaintance old,

Around his chair the elder hung,
About his knees the younger clung,
Of something making each their boast,
As jealous whom he favour'd most ;
While, watching all, with fond delight
The parents view'd the novel sight.

An elder son and daughter sought,
And also shar'd the veteran's note.
The blooming maid, whose face to truth
Express'd the mother, bright with youth,
Seem'd notably begun to share
A portion of the household care.
She had not been to music bred,
Nor taught embroidery or brocade,
To dance cotillions, or to draw ;
The globes, 'tis said, she never saw ;
Her parents had not with her soar'd
To ape the daughters of their lord.
But lovely Esther Goss to trace
In every native gift and grace,
Her bright and animated form
To paint in every glowing charm,

Would place a lovelier shape in view
Than ever Titian's pencil drew.
And Esther, in the rural air,
Could sing as sweet as she was fair ;
Could dance, could knit, could spin, and sew ;
And of geography she knew
Enough to find the aptest way
To town upon the market day ;
And there upon her dapple pad,
In loose surtout and kerchief clad,
And o'er her ears her beaver tied,
With womanly importance hied
She weekly, and her butter new
Disposed amongst the favour'd few.
Her mother said it taught her life,
And fitted her to be a wife.
And Halbert, on that gladsome day,
Fail'd not to Esther Goss to pay
The court'sies, still the valiant's care
And pride to tender to the fair.

A son, who bore his grandsire's name,
Joseph, the heir, and first to claim

The honours of the line of Goss,
Towards the years of manhood rose.
His open and unclouded face
Seem'd all the father to express ;
But in his form Dame Nature told
She meant to mend the race's mould.
And he, at modest distance plac'd,
Soon by our hero's eye was traced ;
When, to the blushing youngker's pride,
He'd have him seated by his side ;
And that, and other court'sies shewn
By Halbert, so on Joseph won,
That ever after he remain'd
Our hero's most assiduous friend.

But, at the courteous hostess' word,
At length the dinner crown'd the board,
The farmer, reverently in place,
To bless the meats pronounc'd the grace,
And help'd, with frankness that supplied
For polish, largely every side ;
While appetite was found to pass
Good substitute for foreign sauce ;

And though, perchance, might not the feast
Have mov'd an Epicurean's zest,
The joints with judgment were combin'd,
And neatness, with profusion join'd,
In all ; for Mrs. Goss profess'd
And piqued herself upon her taste :
And had great Epicurus rear'd
His head, and quarrellous interfer'd,
The sensual sage would there have met
A dire opponent in debate :
For Halbert long and oft declar'd
A nobler treat he never shar'd.

The dinner o'er, and meats withdrawn,
The mental banquet next began ;
And Halbert and the farmer gave,
In turns, their stories, gay and grave,
Till clos'd the late autumnal day,
When home our hero took his way,
By Joseph Goss attended o'er
The uplands to his cottage door.
Not that they for the bull took care,
For Bashan fed no longer there ;

The beast his manners so had soiled,
That he, by order, was exiled
To fields remote, unsèen to graze,
And pass obscure his future days.

Thus gallant Halbert first obtain'd,
Then, by his manners, fix'd a friend :
For now in generous farmer Goss
Such interest for his comfort rose ;
And all his household so was won
By Guise, that, to himself unknown,
Long after things so ordered were
'Twixt Mrs. Goss and Margaret's care,
That oft a ham his pantry stor'd,
A fowl, or griskin, grac'd his board ;
And oft, when he alone would dine,
A cup of grape or currant wine
The languor of his stillness cheer'd,
And never in his bills appear'd.

The joint regard which thus had sprung
'Twixt Goss and Halbert yet was young ;
But daily it in strength increas'd,
Formalities between them ceas'd,

And they their visits, unreserv'd,
Exchang'd, as whim or humour serv'd.
And shortly, on a vacant day,
When Halbert thus in social way
Call'd at the farm, Goss, towards night,
While talking over matters light,
Demanded if our hero knew
Their worthy neighbour, Mr. Drew ;
And, on his negative, rejoin'd —
We'll call on him — he'll take it kind.
Goss press'd, nor could his friend refuse ;
They went that night to sup at Drew's.

Drew had been fortunate, and made
A decent competence in trade ;
Had plac'd his sons, as they had grown,
In useful callings of their own ;
And, having known both smooth and rough,
Retir'd, contented with enough.
He had been call'd at times to fill
The dignities parochial,
And to collect, at various dates,
The taxes and the parish rates ;

Had done his duty ; and, to boot,
Preserv'd through all a good repute :
Indeed, the heads, the county through,
So much respected Mr. Drew,
That he was nam'd to hold a place,
When vacant, in the county peace ;
And Justice Humphries was so ill,
'Twas thought he soon the chair would fill.

The sun had sunk from Walford spire,
And socially, beside their fire,
This ancient trader and his dame
Were talking, days of old their theme ;
His greatest trouble, nought to do,
Her's that she could not see to sew ;
When, at their gate a ponderous knock
The farmer's blunt arrival spoke.
And cordially the ancient pair
Receiv'd their guests ; and much they were
Rejoic'd that Mr. Goss was free,
And proud beneath their roof to see
An officer had held command
In battle for the king and land.

On various points, with various power,
Talk circled ; at the supper-hour
The cloth was laid, the best appear'd,
And all a hearty welcome cheer'd ;
And as the conversation press'd,
Each help'd the knowledge he possess'd.
On landed interests Mr. Goss
Was fluent, never at a loss ;
And, on the county business, few
Could speak in point with Mr. Drew.
But still the theme in chief request,
E'en by the courteous hostess press'd,
Was Halbert's news of kingdoms far,
Of battles and the fates of war,
And many exploits, adventures bold,
And moving tales the warrior told ;
And ceas'd not till, to Drew's regret,
The hour arriv'd to separate ;
When he from Guise a promise gain'd
With him a frequent hour to spend ;
And ever after Halbert knew
A trusty friend in honest Drew.

Thus grew the veteran's neighbours kind ;
Nor merely would his noble mind
Their court'sies meet with honour due,
But often he return'd them too.
As time the anniversaries brought
Of battles fam'd in which he fought ;
Or, hail'd by loyalty's acclaim,
The birth-day of the sovereign came ;
By timely notices secur'd
His friends assembled round his board,
And shar'd, in pride of the event,
Sound fare and manly merriment.
Was it with him to celebrate
A victory that his guests had met ;
Then, round his parlour in array
The arms in which he fought that day
Were slung, triumphant, bruis'd, but bright,
Amid the trophies of the fight,
Which he had from the vanquish'd wrung ;
To each of which a story hung
That, told in nature, might inspire
The dullest with heroic fire :
And on occasions such as this,
Our hero was in nought remiss.

The movements of the glorious day,
And marchings, he would then portray ;
And next the gallant deeds proclaim
Of chiefs and regiments, name by name ;
And, having yielded each their right,
His own he'd modestly recite ;
Would, punctual to the hour, as well
As geographic minute, tell
The point at which the feat was done,
That such or such a trophy won :
And, grown at the remembrance warm,
Would bare his dark but mighty arm,
At once the glorious scar to shew
And weapon that had dealt the blow.
And, in succession, tales like these
Told with such fluency and ease,
That fancy almost might behold
The deeds perform'd of which he told.

Thus Guise, when great events would lend
Their zest, his neighbours entertain'd ;
At other times, alone, content,
His evenings he in quiet spent ;

But, at the farm, in various ways,
With Goss he often pass'd his days ;
And, with the farmer, would survey
His fields, and study husbandry,
Learn when the lands should fallow lie,
What crops would suit the damp or dry,
What time the grains were to be sown,
And how to judge the pulse, when grown,
Attend the busy reaper-train ;
Review the housing of the grain ;
And, punctual every year, was there
The merry harvest-home to share.

But pastimes of a graver kind
Sometimes employ'd the veteran's mind.
He who, from Walford's justice chair,
Had Judgment's fulminations dire
For forty years, from time to time,
Hurl'd boldly at the hydra Crime,
Had given the hope of conquest o'er —
Old Justice Humphries was no more ;
And Drew, now Samuel Drew, Esquire,
Was dubb'd a justice of the shire.

And, thus his highest aim achiev'd,
When the commission Drew receiv'd,
He, at the high instalment feast,
Where Halbert was a special guest,
Assur'd the veteran he'd be proud,
When other calling time allow'd,
To see him take his station near
Him in the reverend justice chair ;
And gallant Guise his friend assur'd
He often would ; and kept his word.
For often, on the public days,
When the contentions, brawls, and frays,
That vex'd the town, or nightly harm,
Call'd forth the magisterial arm,
Seated the justice gravely near,
He'd all the borough jarrings hear ;
And oft his presence spread an awe,
Did more for peace than could the law ;
His aspect stern, and person strong,
So staid the right, and aw'd the wrong,
That his appearance there was view'd
By many as a public good.

Thus, studies of the borough law
From studying corn brave Guise would draw :
And in his shrewd remarks, and keen
Observes on both, such powers were seen,
That it was difficult to tell
In which his genius might excel.
But, thus while languid age he eas'd,
His friends he ever charm'd and pleas'd.

Nor were his friends to few confin'd ;
His manners mild, and nature kind,
To him of all the favour bent,
And won him grace where'er he went.
At church, of which he still avail'd
Himself, and ne'er on Sunday fail'd,
In full regalia to prefer
The homage due to Heaven in prayer,
His grave demeanour, which contain'd
A piety not to be feign'd,
Oft from the baron's pew had been
Remark'd, and by the parson seen :
For oft, at church, with secret joy,
The parson would his reverence eye ;

And he at church, the parson, too,
Admir'd, 'twas all of him he knew.
But fortune, with whatever views,
So ordered that, ere long, at Drew's,
The brave defender of the state
And warrior of the Spirit met.

In their conditions clearly stood
A sympathetic brotherhood :
Both cited to vocations high ;
Both faithful ; both neglected by
The aids preferment that secure ;
Both old and honourably poor ;
Both to their destinies resign'd ;
And e'en their manners of a kind.

Such points of coalescence seen,
'Twill move no wonder that between
Them, at the earliest interview,
Regard and fellow feeling grew.
It therefore needs but mention here
That thencefore they were friends sincere ;
And though the parson's spiritual cares
Small leisure left for light affairs,

The veteran oft the hour would share
He could to worldly converse spare ;
Yet oft between them less was given,
E'en of that hour, to earth than heaven.

The parson was a man who stood
Much on a life of rectitude :
That is, he held it small avail
To plead his faith, for living well ;
The doctrines he at church discours'd
His manners in the world enforc'd ;
He taught what it was good to do,
And taught but what he practis'd too ;
He never sought to please the sense
By tropes, and studied eloquence,
By metaphor or symbol smooth
To mould to fashion gospel truth :
Indifferent of the world's account,
Like Him that preach'd upon the mount,
The meek and penitent he cheer'd ;
But, high or low, where faults appear'd,
He by the sword from Scripture drawn,
Superior to the fear of man,

A champion in his Master's might,
Put sin to shame, and vice to flight.

No priestly fopperies had he,
No purpose-serving sanctity ;
No aims, by counterfeited zeal,
To earthly dignities to steal ;
For to his soul the hope was given
A mitre waited him in heaven.
A settled calm sat on his face
Above the world's contingencies ;
A peace unmoved by joy or pain
At worldly loss, or worldly gain,
For he had treasures under seal
Where robbers break not through to steal.

Yet, though to schemes of worldly pride
And self-advancing cares denied,
His heart, by charity imbu'd,
Sought ceaseless to do others good.
The sick who sunk disease beneath
Found him a friend in life and death ;
By his compassion sorrow's head
Was rais'd, and misery cloth'd and fed.

Not from his narrow funds, indeed,
Could he administer to need,
But he advanc'd the sufferer's prayer,
Where'er there was a boon to spare :
And, of the plea, whate'er the claim,
Such weight was in the pleader's name,
So pure his life from selfish stain,
He seldom mov'd his suit in vain.

Of those, amongst the wealthy round,
With whom the parson's suit had found
A constant ear, and prompt relief,
The baron's lady was the chief.
The baron's ancestors had been
The feudal lords of the domain,
And from their ancient power had grown
Great weight and influence in the town ;
But offices of high import
Detain'd the baron much at court ;
High place and power in state affairs
Detach'd his mind from lighter cares,
And those, in all that might avail
The borough or the manor's weal,

The poor to succour, or redress
The wrong'd, lay with the baroness ;
Who, not dispos'd her mind to drown
In fashion's vortex in the town,
Demure as may her taste appear,
Liv'd in the country all the year.
And though the parson oft appeal'd,
The lady's bounty never fail'd ;
His suit in her benevolent mind
Found ever a reception kind.
Oft, too, with him she would unbend
Her rank, and, as a social friend,
Converse upon his pastoral cares,
On passing news, and town affairs.

Now, it appears, the town's surprise,
When first appear'd our veteran Guise,
The curiosity confus'd
That rag'd, the countess had amus'd ;
And, though that wonder now had ceas'd,
By time, or wonders new, replac'd,
She had observ'd his reverend air
At church, and constant presence there ;



And, deeming she in him defin'd
The features of superior mind,
Oft in her bosom wishes grew
That more of his estate she knew ;
And this, her generous request,
She to the parson now express'd.

The parson, eager to do good
To all, but chief where merit stood
His warrant, Halbert's history knew
Both from himself and Justice Drew :
And, doubtless, nothing now set forth
Detractory of our hero's worth.
But records and traditions fail
What pass'd precisely to detail ;
And what was said, or that, or this,
We do not learn, and will not guess :
Suffice it, ere a month had flown
The baron to his seat came down ;
And, ere 'twas long, Lieutenant Guise
Receiv'd a note, with strange surprise,
Inviting him, on what design
He knew not, with my lord to dine.

The baron, who had grown morose
In brawls political, was close
And distant ; but his mind, though bent
By business, was benevolent.
And his discourse, at first, with Guise,
On every subject was concise
And cautious : thus he sought to scan,
In all he could not see, the man.
He first the hardy veteran ask'd
His years of regular service ; task'd
Him close on each campaign, and siege,
Where actually he did engage.
Then mus'd ; then ask'd his generals' names ;
Spoke low, and half aside, of claims ;
Ask'd, and again made him the date
Of his lieutenancy repeat ;
Confess'd his regiment's brave essays
Had merited their country's praise ;
But mark'd, how hardly could be serv'd
Particular claims, where all deserv'd :
Then, delicately to evade
A point where little could be said,
He tried the brave lieutenant's skill
And reach on points professional ;

And oft could scarce conceal surprise
To hear his soldier-like replies ;
His bold and penetrating sense,
Which, temper'd all by diffidence,
Announc'd a strong redundant mind
To spheres beneath its powers confin'd.

Meanwhile, to all at table said
The countess less attention paid,
Than in the duties of the feast
To render honour to her guest :
Yet, as the conversation veer'd,
Where case or incident appear'd
That set the veteran's service forth
To vantage, or implied his worth,
Her sure remark brought more to light
The fact, or gave the inference weight.
Till, mov'd by unperceiv'd degrees,
The baron brighten'd, seem'd at ease,
And by his courtesies confess'd
Brave Halbert an approved guest.

Nor was the peer, at length, confin'd
To courtesies of trivial kind,

For, dinner o'er, by state parade
Attended, he the veteran led
Into the great baronial hall
Where blazonings armorial,
And scutcheons moulder'd, to define
The length and glories of his line ;
And where, involv'd in sheets of rust,
And, at the least, a century's dust,
Well vouching those who us'd them strong,
The armour of his fathers hung :
Dumb monitors of many a jar,
In chivalry and feudal war !
Yet shedding through their gloom sublime,
The glories of departed time.

And need the lingering lay recite
Our warrior's supreme delight ?
Will it be thought his heart was cold
While deeds of heroes past were told ;
While deign'd the baron to expound
Each club and ponderous missile round,
Which, now to war though last in name,
Will ever swell the rolls of fame ?

Suffice it, all things were explain'd,
And Halbert, highly entertain'd,
In his remarks oft shrewdly drew
From subjects old reflections new ;
And worthy the regard might claim
As well his noble host, as theme.

At length when, at approach of eve,
Brave Guise prepar'd to take his leave,
The peer, observing all polite
Respect, as his profession's right,
Did furthermore to him award,
As special mark of his regard,
The freedom of his game and grounds
For sport, through all the manor's bounds ;
And, finally, with warmth unfeign'd,
Desir'd to be esteem'd his friend.
When Halbert duteous took his way,
Still pondering to what cause to lay
Such high distinction to him shewn
By nobles all to him unknown.

But morn, in scenes secure to please,
Brought him again his wonted ease ;

With home and humble fare content,
As wont he in his garden spent
Those seasons when the ether bland
Opens the earth to culture's hand ;
Nor, when his little grounds were lost,
With all the world without, in frost,
Would he effeminately shun
The fields, and pleasures of his gun.
But when the winter, cloth'd in rain
And darkness, drench'd the cheerless plain,
His time, as might his age require,
He pass'd beside his cottage fire ;
Employ'd, as might the whim obtain,
But never mentally in vain :
For, though our hero was not rife
Of lore, or vers'd in books, or life,
'Yond what the camp or tented field,
At duty's intervals, might yield ;
Yet sketches of the world he knew,
And read occasionally, too.
And near his chimney, on the right,
Convenient both for warmth and light,
His books, on shelves of massive wood,
In various boards and bindings stood.

His books, and let not pedants mock
At Halbert's taste and classic stock,
Were, like the fates that had supplied
Their store, in kind diversified.
Here, Moore Carew for fame made head
On the same shelf with Charles the Swede ;
The conqueror fam'd of Macedon
With Robin Hood and Little John.
Here rang'd — companions, social guests —
John Bunyan's wars, Joe Miller's jests ;
Here, moral maxims, cures for care,
Ballads, bon-mots, and books of prayer ;
Charts, sermons, tales, and gazetteers,
Mingled, unconscious compeers.
Association strange ! to wait
The memory of the proud, the great,
The wise, the ingenious, and the brave,
The learn'd, the witty, and the grave ;
But ye who present joys disclaim,
To catch the phantom, future fame,
Deem little, down life's dubious steep,
What fellowship you'll have to keep.

Such Halbert's field supplies had been :
But now a history, magazine,
Or travels, more would him amuse.
But over all he lov'd the news :
And, true to order, from the town
The court gazette came weekly down ;
The faithful oracle of Mars,
With all the tidings of the wars ;
The news at court, the list at Lloyd's,
The weather, holidays, and tides ;
The London markets, in detail,
With all commodities on sale.
And what the produce, what the ware
That is not marketable there ?
There, where the earth and sea's supplies
Might trade's avidities suffice,
What virtue is not daily sold
For influence, place, or power, or gold ?
And, from the 'Change, the world's resort,
From crowded Cornhill to the court,
The scrivener to the kingdom's head —
Who trucks not in the dirty trade ?

But over all in the gazette
News of the war was Halbert's treat.
On foreign service all his length
Of life, he knew each place of strength ;
Could every post and pass define
Between the Danube and the Rhine ;
And scarce a fresh despatch arriv'd,
But its localities reviv'd
Pursuits of glory, though resign'd,
Ne'er to be sever'd from his mind.
Then, sometimes, 'mongst the past reviews,
With spirits sunk, he'd sit and muse
Upon the splendid hopes that lent
His youth its fire, and their event :
Through the long march, the watchful night,
And battle at the dawn of light,
The hopes that fed his ardour's flame,
The hope of eminence and name ;
All past ! and the event to be
Retrenchment, age, obscurity !
Life lingering till the memory rot,
And, but to die, to be forgot !

But these were glooms that overcast
Rarely his peace, and soon were past ;
Tumors of the inverted brain,
His vigorous sentiment's disdain ;
The selfish dreams that haunt the slave,
Scorn'd by the generous and brave ;
Whose country's good their single aim ;
Its wealth, theirs ; its renown, their fame ;
And soon the sun of Halbert's mind
Dispell'd such damps and broodings blind.
And next when news of the campaign
Arriv'd, when the gazette again
Announc'd the armies on their route,
His charts and gazetteers were out ;
And with his compasses and scale
Through many a track he knew full well,
He'd mark their movements, and presage
Almost the day they would engage.

Then, on the calculated night
For the despatches of the fight,
If Britons, to their colours true,
Had done as he had seen them do,

His friends were ask'd, his zeal who shar'd ;
His great oak table was prepar'd ;
And spectacl'd, for surer sight,
Gazette in left hand, chalk in right,
True to official sense throughout
He'd mark the moving battle out ;
Lay down the lines and lengthen'd ranks,
The hollow square, and deep phalanx,
The direful batt'ries, the redoubts,
The flying squadrons, and the scouts
Alert at distance to observe
The flanks, and the remote reserve.

Th' eventful battle now begun,
He'd o'er its mixing movements run ;
Point out th' artillery first discharg'd,
The lines that in succession charg'd,
Where horse and foot like havoc spread,
And strew'd the trembling earth with dead.
Then would he mark the pass or post
So often won, so often lost ;
Where chief the battle's fury rag'd,
And only heroes were engag'd ;

Where, silenced on each side the gun,
By arm and steel the work was done,
And foes, encountering beard to beard,
Victor, or vanquish'd, glory shar'd.

Then, when impeded by its wrecks,
Dismounted cannon, hamlets, brakes,
And farms on fire, the battle spread
In meagre bands, but still array'd,
He'd follow every corps with care ;
Expunge them here, and dot them there ;
And every march and movement shew
Up to the final overthrow :
So clearly, none could ever say
Whether the most their wonder lay,
Throughout the various detail,
Upon the teller, or the tale.

Thus would the veteran oft amuse
Himself and neighbours o'er the news :
And to enjoy his favourite treat,
Which still was new with each gazette,
Howe'er engagements else might fall,
News-night was set apart from all.

Towards the hour the post came in,
Brave Guise was regularly within ;
His table and his easy chair
Plac'd to the light, and Margaret's ear,
Instinctively, an hour before
The time, alert upon the door ;
And with miscarriages but few,
The news arriv'd, to contract true.

But, one news evening, be it known,
The post brought not the news alone.
That night a second packet came
Which made to note even stronger claim.
On it the stamps of office were
Distinct ; its superscription fair,
“ On service, to Lieutenant Guise,”
Brave Halbert read with strong surprise ;
And its contents to understand,
He broke its seal with careful hand ;
And found that it in form express'd
Lieutenant Halbert Guise replac'd,
By order, from a stated day,
On actual service, and full pay.

Next said, “ The king, on viewing his
Long and right trusty services,
Had pleas’d to grant him the degree,
Honour, and rank of captaincy ;”
And further charg’d him to “ take heed,
And with convenient haste proceed,
As these instructions came to hand,
To London, and await command.”

The warrior’s heart advanc’d and fled
By turns, while he the letter read ;
It was correct — there could not be
Doubt of its authenticity !
He hesitated, read, and then,
Considering, read it o’er again :
Then letting it as genuine pass,
He strove to guess its moving cause ;
But guess’d in vain, for, all unknown
To him, ’twas by the baron done.
For he no sooner reach’d the court,
Than of brave Guise he made report,
And purpos’d speedily to bring
Him to the presence of the king.

But Halbert still in mind revolv'd
Th' event ; and still it stood unsolv'd.
Yet, long inur'd, without delay
Or question, orders to obey,
As soon as his resolves had grown
To form, he summon'd Margaret Brown ;
And, with his wonted placid air,
Gave her instructions to prepare
Upon the morrow for his route ;
As he for London should set out
The following day ; which, having said,
And lightly supp'd, he went to bed.

He pass'd the night absorb'd in thought,
Into a thousand visions wrought ;
Nor had, nor seem'd to need repose ;
Yet at the dawn, as wont, he rose ;
And, long experienc'd to prepare
For sudden movements, by his care
All things were quickly in array
For marching on the coming day.
And as he, early, his polite
Respects had issued to invite

His friends, and chiefly Goss and Drew,
To bid them all a kind adieu,
The packing scarce was o'er, and clear'd
The way, when all of them appear'd.

And now congratulations pass'd,
And compliments ran loud and fast ;
The farmer, in his wonted vein,
Dwelt, pleas'd, on gallant Halbert's gain
In the advancement of his state ;
And hop'd, with ardour, that he yet
Would see him largely, as he ought,
Share of the soil for which he fought.

The happy days they had enjoy'd
Together, and the dreary void
That to their friendships would ensue,
Lay heaviest at first on Drew ;
But those regrets were soon subdu'd ;
The change was to his friend for good ;
And, fairly calculating thence,
He hoped, one day, to see his sense
Employ'd in public justice' cause,
Fence, equal with his sword, the laws.

Brave Halbert, though 'twas honour's call
Remov'd him, his regrets to all
That he must leave them oft express'd ;
But said, they ever in his breast
Should live : and, though the king's commands
Might send him to remotest lands,
Through every fortune in his mind
Their memories grateful place should find.

And now his friends to his affairs
Domestic turn'd their generous cares ;
And, after they were oft resolv'd
In mind, it was at length resolv'd
That, under Goss and Drew's survey,
Margaret in household charge should stay,
Keep all in order, and go on,
Until, his destination known,
Her master, as was his benign
Intention, should to her assign
Such recompense as he could spare,
For her true services and care.
And thus, all matters order'd right,
The hour of marching fixed for eight

The coming morn, and every friend
Fix'd by his promise to attend,
The serious conference early rose,
And left brave Guise to his repose.

But here we must not fail to say,
That early on that stirring day,
The countess, who had, by advice
From London, heard his fortune's rise,
A letter to the captain sent
Of compliment on the event :
Wishing him, courteously, withal,
Safe journey to the capital ;
And that he might, by worth, assert
His rank, and rise to his desert.

The kind and pious parson, too,
Had heard the news, and sent by Drew
His grave mementos, to control
Ambition ; and forewarn his soul
Against neglecting to essay
Honours that do not fade away ;
Or being by worldly glory driven
To forfeit of his crown in heaven.

And blessed be the "still small voice,"
That thus admonishes our choice.
By living wisely here, to save
The hope of life beyond the grave :
For all on its anterior side,
So much the source of strife and care,
To individual man is tied
Only by cords of gossamer.

His friends withdrawn ; to seek for rest
In sleep, brave Guise himself address'd.
But, rising slowly to repair
To bed, he fainted in his chair ;
A sudden qualm seem'd to o'ercast
His powers, yet only came, and pass'd ;
For scarce was roused Margaret's fear,
When, rallying, he said, with cheer,
All's well enough ; and then arose
And pass'd, as wont, to his repose.
But Margaret, deeming she could spy
Change in his countenance and eye,
Sat up, in fear of something ill,
And listened oft, but all was still.

The morrow dawn'd with lustre bright,
On who had pass'd in sleep the night ;
But Halbert of that salve of care
Again had sought in vain to share.
Truth was, that, like the Trojan steel
That pierc'd at last Achilles' heel,
Events had, of our hero tried,
At length assail'd the weaker side :
In disappointments he was prov'd ;
Adversity had nothing mov'd
Him ; on that side, from usage long,
His powers and faculties were strong :
But unexpectedly to find
Hopes, once the magnet of his mind,
Ambitions of his blood's full tide,
When long extinguish'd, gratified ;
Had put an action on his heart
That labour'd its corporeal part ;
And ask'd his pulses, when too late,
To youth's intensities to beat :
Yet where in aught his powers declin'd,
The flesh was faulty, not the mind.
For careful to preclude delay,
Brave Halbert rose at dawn of day,

Regardless of his sleepless night ;
And long before the hour of eight,
Appear'd in uniform complete
For his departure, and to greet
His friends, who, emulous in respect,
Attended all, to time correct.

The generous Goss, and Drew, sincere,
Were seated close to Halbert's chair,
With other friends in order near ;
And Margaret waited in the rear ;
All painfully resign'd to part :
And Halbert seem'd about to start ;
But, as he to a question spoke,
Fell on his heart a sudden stroke
That down his corporeal functions bore,
And, sunk on Goss, he seem'd no more.

Dismay and terror seiz'd on all ;
A skilful doctor came at call ;
The lancet struck, he, haply, bled,
And yet his fluttering spirit staid :
But in a stupor still he lay,
And little would the doctor say.

It pass'd abroad, and was the theme
Of general grief; the parson came :
The doctor all his art essay'd,
And fervently the parson pray'd ;
But thus, amidst his friends, till night
The warrior lay ; when, hard on eight,
He, softly whispering, thank'd their care,
And bade them for like hour prepare ;
Then, reaching at his sword, he sigh'd,
And grasping it convulsive, died !

As his preferment first had flown,
So now his death spread through the town ;
And, such was all the people's grief,
'Twas hard to tell the mourners chief.
The baroness, with bounty large,
Of his obsequies took the charge ;
The military, at her claim,
From the adjacent city came,
And, latest duty to the brave,
Did martial honours at his grave.

His will was found in his 'scrutoire,
Which this, alas ! sole item bore :

That Margaret Brown, should she survive
Him, was to hold his house for life ;
The same from her to pass secure
For ever to the parish poor.
And piously to the deceas'd
Was executed the bequest.

The baron, who had heard in town
Of the event, ere long came down ;
And to the hero's memory lent
A stately granite monument,
Whose hardy texture well express'd
The rock, while living, that it press'd.
And ye, who to our warrior's end
Grant the condolence of a friend ;
Who have not heard of his renown ?
Or ever pass'd through Walford town ?
Or, passing there, have not been shown
The trophies on the church-way stone ?
There, in his last cantonment, lies
The brave, the gallant CAPTAIN GUISE !

THE
BATTLE OF LONCARTY

AN
Historical Poem,

IN
TEN CANTOS.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Poem had its origin in a desire to illustrate in verse a famous achievement that took place at the Battle of Loncarty, in Scotland, which happened about the end of the tenth century, in the reign of KENNETH III.; in which a peasant, named HAY, and his two Sons, who chanced to be ploughing in a field near the place of battle, stayed the flight of the Scottish army, when it was on the point of being destroyed, and thereby saved their Country from subjection to the Danish yoke.

The incident I allude to is, without doubt, one of the most romantic in the

history of the world: so much so, indeed, that many, without duly considering the nature of ancient warfare amongst semi-barbarous nations, class it amongst old fables, and give no credit to it. But so many old historians have recorded it as fact, and so clearly are the memorials of it to be traced in the ancient traditions, and even monuments, of the quarter in which it happened, that, though later compilers of history, with the natural desire of showing superior sagacity, either overlook the story, or treat it as fabulous, to me it seems to betray a defective knowledge of antiquity to entertain a doubt of it.

In my boyish days in Scotland I had heard several quaint legends on this event; but, like other legends, they only excited a momentary gleam of wonder, and passed away without impressing the mind sufficiently to secure their remembrance. At a

more advanced period of life, however, when I chanced on the very clear account given of it in Buchanan's history, nationality took up the subject, and I saw no reason why this instance of heroic patriotism in ancient Scotland should not have a place in the rolls of fame, as well as the defence of the Pass of Thermopylæ by the Greeks, or that of the bridge at Rome by Horatius Cocles; which, considering the neglect into which the history it is recorded in has fallen, I saw no way of effecting without a touch of the pencil of poetry.

I accordingly commenced the work, intending to confine my essay to the landing, and the cruelty exercised by the Danes in that inroad, the subsequent Battle at Loncarty, the victory gained by the intrepidity of the Hays, and the singular manner in which, according to tradition, they were rewarded for their valour. But,

on reflecting that poetry is never generally interesting, unless it enter into the natural connexions and passions of mankind, I extended my plan, making the Poem to open some four years previous to the landing of the Danes, and founding the epic department of it on some of the events of that eventful period.

After I had thus completed the piece, without having the least surmise that any person had ever thought of using the subject in poetry before me, to my no small surprise, I found I had been anticipated in the story of the Hays, and that, too, by no less a person than Shakespeare, who makes use of it in his *Battle of the Britons and Romans* in the fifth act of *Cymbeline*; and further discovered that Milton, at some period of his life, had been engaged with the story.

The following is Musgrave's note on the *Battle of the Britons and Romans in Cym-*

beline, as it appears in Bell's edition of Shakespeare, where I made the above discovery.

“ The stopping of the army by three persons, is an allusion to the story of the Hays, as related by Hollinshed in his ‘ History of Scotland,’ ” p. 155.

“ ‘ There was neere to the place of battelle a long lane fenced on the sides with ditches and walles made of turfe, through which the Scots which fled were beaten down by the enemies in heapes. Here Haie, with his Sons, supposing they might best staie the flight, placed themselves overthwart the lane, beat them back whom they met fleeing, and spared neither friend nor fo, but down they went, all such as came within their reach ; wherewith divers hardie personages cried out unto their fellows to return backe unto the battelle.’ ” &c.

“ It appears from Peck's ‘ New Memoirs,’

&c. article 88, that Milton intended to have written a play upon this subject."

This much in regard to the historical character of the following Poem, I think it right here to state. The moral purposes of it are, to shew the great blessings we enjoy, who live under laws tried and perfected by long experience, compared with the miserable condition of our ancestors before civil compacts were so adjusted as to obtain the due control over society; and, in thus setting forth the great value of fixed and established laws, show the madness and wickedness of taking from such that reverence which is their chief strength, by submitting them to continual changes, as the interests of party, or the dogmas of theorists, may dictate.

THE
BATTLE OF LONCARTY:
A Poem.

INDUCTION.

SEEK ye that spot on Albion's isle
Where foreign sword or foreign guile
 Could never yet prevail?
Where lived the race that, unsubdued,
Invasion's ruthless bands withstood,
And ne'er, till spent in civil feud,
 Before the alien fell?

Seek ye that spot to shed a tear
 Upon the Patriot's grave?
Warms it your heart the song to hear,
 That celebrates the brave?

Love ye, when patriot pride inspires
Your bosoms, from the immortal fires
Of the wild valour of your sires

The burning brand to steal ?
Look back to Scotland in her day,
And trace the banks of famous Tay :
There on a time eventful lay
The action of my tale.

They were achievements, when they passed,
That struck a wondering age aghast ;
And are, though ages since have rolled,
Still proudly to the stranger told,
Who seeks the scene where yet, between
The woods that skirt Kinnoul, are seen
Remains of names which seem to say
No time shall waste their fame away,
Till from oblivion the lay

Their patriot virtues shield ;
From story trite, and legend tame,
Till Poesy snatch th' immortal theme ;
And give the brave the fame of song
In strains that to their worth belong,

And deathless glory yield
To the Three Shields, in peril's day
Who stoutly stood their Country's stay
In Loncarty's dread field.

Such is, in lack of prouder name
To gild the song, the Muse's theme.
Bard of the hills! whose strains of fire
Have rapt to heaven the Celtic lyre,
Pass, in your mists, her harp along,
And raise her strains and swell her song,
To all her subjects' claim!

CANTO I.

Now blushing o'er the youthful year
Rose morn; and hollow on the ear
The din of trampling steeds and men
Roll'd over Methven's wintry plain.
The Thane had rais'd his clan's array
The arts of battle to portray,
To try his son in war's alarms,
And train him to the shock of arms;
For long renown'd the line had been
Of great Rodardus, Methven's Thane.
His large and populous domains
Embrac'd the thousand straths and glens
Which to the sun their glades display
Between the floods of Earn and Tay;
An hundred glens his tartans wore,
An hundred chiefs his banners bore,

And ne'er was stay'd in battle's hour
The great Abthane* of Methven's power.

Such Methven : and his pleasure lay,
When higher duty's claims gave way,
In martial feats to prove his trains :
And oft the neighbouring youthful thanes,
In arms and warlike ardour gay,
Assembled in the mimic fray.
Oft, too, by sire or brother's side,
The smiling fair adorn'd the field,
And secretly the weapons ply'd
That scorn the youthful warrior's shield ;
And many a chieftain young and gay,
And gallant knight, and lady fair,
The splendid Tournament's display
To aid, or witness, now were there ;
While others still advanc'd in view,
And still the vast assemblage grew.

To speak of all who grac'd the plain,
Or only of each noble train

* Thane of Thanes.

To give the blazonry and name,
Would load in vain the rising theme :
But one amongst th' assembling throng
Of noble knights and warriors young,
Alone and pensive on his way,
A moment claims the passing lay.

He, clad a hunter, tall and strong,
And shunning the promiscuous throng,
With solemn steps drew on :
His outward robe of roan-deer hide
A baldric richly studded tied,
A hunting spear hung at his side :
And thus the strange unknown
Of late had oft been seen to rove
Near Methven's towers through wood and grove,
Still seeming loath remark to move,
A wandering hunter lone.
But now an armed attendant, hoar
With age, behind him bending bore
The harnessing and panoply
That knighthood only may display ;
And led a steed which seem'd to bear
His hoofs as if he trod on air.

And thus unknown in rank or name,
The tournament to view
He pass'd, and, as appeared his aim,
No observation drew.

But now the chiefs their pennons spread,
The war-pipes pealed, the trumpets bray'd,
In adverse columns on the plains
Advanc'd the marshall'd warrior trains,
Shouts shook the ground, and through the sky
In clouds the blunted missiles fly,
The thick battalions furious close,
And all the seeming battle rose ;
While bright at every column's head
Some youthful chief his skill display'd,
The onset led, or form'd to meet
The charge, or order'd the retreat ;
Or in encounters shield to shield,
The single combats splendid arts revealed.

Thus was the field of war portray'd
By many a beauteous eye survey'd.

But brightest of the sparkling train
Of noble dames who grac'd the plain
Was Methven's daughter, of all eyes
Her beauty made submissive prize ;
For Inva, grown from childhood hight,
Soft as a flower, and fair as light,
Had now attain'd the charms that grace
 The virgin's perfect years,
And all to her in loveliness
 The time had no compeers.

But thus in youthful charms array'd,
Whilst she the marshall'd field survey'd,
No care her gentle bosom mov'd,
But for her sire, and brother lov'd.
Her noble brother now had seen
The woods a twentieth summer green,
And promis'd soon in arms to grace
The ancient honours of his race ;
Yet, though he well already knew
To poise the spear, and bend the yew,
His sire, in fond paternal care,
Still sought from war his youth to spare.

But brave Gilwarden's ardent soul
Now spurn'd at boyhood's tame control,
And glow'd in fields of arms to claim
The noble strife that leads to fame.
And heated now by war's display,
Through all the thronging field's array
The fiercest he to battle brought,
And honour's dangerous combat sought
With many who in war were tried,
And had their country's foes defied ;
But all he thus to battle drew
Soon from his bold encounter flew.

Foild ever thus, at length, in thought
Depress'd, his noble sire he sought ;
And, of his youthful powers restrain'd,
Calmly determin'd, thus complain'd.
Sire ! must I thus for ever play
Inglorious in the mock array
Of war ? conduct th' embattl'd train
To sport, and shine in arms in vain ?
I have attain'd to manhood's pride,
And am in danger's field untried ;

Give me to day to prove my claim
To my illustrious line and name,
Give me a knight with whom to wield
The spear for fame, or leave to quit the field.

With secret pride great Methven eyed
His rousing mind ; but thus replied :
How ! son, will none of all my train,
Unask'd, relieve your warlike vein ?
None prove, of choice ! your ardent steel ?
That you so bold to me appeal :
But as you thus invoke mine ear,
Your valour shall have proof, I swear !
Go, heralds, with the sound of shield
And trumpets through the marshall'd field,
And, on my warranty and name,
Aloud that all may hear, proclaim
That Lord Gilwarden, to the fight
By knighthood's laws controll'd,
Dares forth the proudest, bravest Knight
That this gay field may hold.
That on degree of rank or name
None barr'd the lists shall be,

Save whom the laws of arms disclaim ;
And any knight is free
With him, to mortal issue, here
To try the mast'ry of the spear.

He said : the trumpet's echoing clang
Through all the distance instant rang ;
And straight, like pausing thunder, o'er
The field was hush'd the battle's roar.
The warlike lines, array'd in haste,
The heralds with the challenge trac'd ;
The youthful champion rode in sight,
Preparing proudly for the fight ;
And wonder how th' event would close,
And panting expectation rose.
But beauteous Inva's softer breast
Was all by anxious cares possess'd,
Her brother's youth, and arm untried
She fear'd, and for his safety sigh'd ;
For known 'twas to the timid fair
That warriors fierce and proud were there.

But once the challenge through the vast
And silent field unanswered passed :

The trumpet's deep'ning sound again
Travers'd the dark embattled plain ;
But save its blasts from hill to hill
Re-echoed, all as yet was still ;
No warrior mov'd, no plume or spear
Seem'd from the sable lines to peer ;
And thrice, at length, the herald train
Proclaim'd the challenge, but in vain,
No knight stood forth, though throngs were
 there,
To cope in arms with Methven's heir.

Thus seem'd the sports, which gaily rose,
To flag and draw towards a close :
Yet scarcely this observance drew,
When all were wak'd to wonder new ;
For quickly, southward, shouts from far
Were heard, and like a shooting star,
Towards Rodardus and his train,
A knight rode glittering through the plain,
Mail'd cap-à-pié, in harness bright,
And, by his arms, an English knight ;

For royal Edgar's argent cross
Shone on his azure shield,
And on his lofty helmet's boss
The dragon stood revealed ;
The stranger he, the hunter lone,
Who join'd the field to all unknown.

An English knight, alone, to view
Amongst them, thus array'd
In arms, through all the clans a new
And strange sensation spread.
But he, unmov'd, the warlike band
Approach'd with homage fair,
And in the tongue of Saxon land
Thus spoke with dauntless air.
Brave knights of Scotland, glory's charms
Have drawn me to this land of arms ;
I come with hope to vantage here
My studies of the sword and spear.
Of late King Edgar's court I left,
My knighthood is that monarch's gift,
As my armorial signs proclaim,
Sir Edric, of the Spur, my name :

And faithful to my high degree
In arms, I cannot passive see
Yon champion brave this marshall'd plain,
And ask the tilt of arms in vain.
If then the Scottish knights decline
His battle, be that honour mine ;
For it may not be said in knighthood's ear
That I the threat of arms unanswer'd hear.

He spoke : and thus in accents bold
While he the clans address'd,
In throngs him nearer to behold
Both chiefs and ladies pressed.
And though his helm, for battle closed,
The eye which sought his face opposed,
And but to few his speech was known ;
His graceful form and mien
High rev'rence for his presence won
From all the thronging scene.
But Inva, whose affections strong
Upon her youthful brother hung,
To join the general gaze declined,
For dark present'ments filled her mind ;

And, from the stranger coldly turn'd,
She secretly his presence mourn'd.
Amongst the clans there also rose
Resolves the combat to oppose :
Shall Lord Gilwarden pledge his fame,
Cried some, at any stranger's claim ?
To such an yielding to descend
Might much against his rank offend ;
The fight must therefore be denied.
When Methven heard, and thus replied :

Chiefs ! for the high regard you bear
My house, accept my thanks sincere ;
But nice distinctions here to claim
May place in risk our country's fame.
Shall strangers bear the tale away
To England's court, and, taunting, say—
The Scottish chieftain's rank defends
His fame ?—he only fights his friends !—
If, then, we, as the umpires here,
A due regard to honour bear,
We shall not from the proffer'd fight
Bar any present Christian knight ;

And that our faith the stranger holds
The symbol of his shield unfolds
That knighthood, and its laws, he knows,
His military girdle shews :
Yet with my son it rests, to choose
His battle, or his claims refuse :
And whether he 'll resign the day,
Or fight the stranger, let him say.

Thus spoke the Thane ; when loudly cried
Gilwarden ; Words in me were pride ;
But I have not assum'd the field
Its honors thus, untried, to yield ;
And, than the English champion, none
I'd rather meet ; brave knight, come on ;
He cried, and took a wide career,
His target brac'd, and fixed his spear ;
While also fitting for the fight
Rode proudly forth the stranger knight.

And now oppos'd in bright display,
All eyes were on them drawn ;

And speedily, from distant play
The combat dread began ;
When man to man, and horse to horse,
Moving in all their pride and force,
Inspir'd, alternate' with delight
And terror, all who viewed the fight.
And 'mid surrounding hopes and fears,
Thus, long with skill profound
They fought ; and when their broken spears
In pieces strew'd the ground,
With equal ardour, sword to sword,
The furious battle they restor'd.

But long from skill, 'twas not conceal'd
Who had the mastery of the field ;
For oft though Lord Gilwarden gave
High proof of art, and courage brave,
'Twas marked that still the stranger knight
Controll'd his action and his might ;
And ever firm, serene, and gay,
Seem'd studious rather to display
The combat's arts, than of his foe
To seek the vantage or o'erthrow ;

Yet in the battle's every part
Gave such display of grace and art,
As few the like had e'er beheld,
And none had ever seen excell'd.

Thus many, all the fight throughout,
Observ'd the stranger knight with doubt,
And fear'd that for some fatal end
His powers surpassing were restrain'd ;
For still he urg'd the fight, though all
Observ'd Gilwarden's ardour fall :
And even his sire, in secret thought
With fear for the event was fraught :
But honor's institutes severe
Forbade even him to interfere.

And now his vantage to embrace
The stranger more appear'd to press :
His strokes fell faster, louder rung,
And o'er his bending foe he hung,
Strong as the blast that on the lea
Rocks ev'ry way the lonely tree.
Yet brave Gilwarden still maintain'd
The battle ; but at length constrain'd

To droop, the stranger pressed anew,
And from his grasp his weapon threw ;
Leaving him to a thrust exposed,
That launched would have his scene of glory
 clos'd :

But, that with skilful movement done,
The stranger cast to earth his own,
His shield upon his thigh reclined,
And modestly the further fight resign'd.

The stranger's presence in their plains
At first had mov'd the Scottish trains,
But their amazement doubly grew
His gallantry in arms to view :
And though he, all unknown, had won
The victory from their chieftain's son,
So much do noble acts delight
And ravish the beholders' sight,
That instantly to his applause
A general shout from all arose.

The battle thus both nobly won
And lost, the Thane embrac'd his son

With rapture not to be repress'd,
And then the stranger thus address'd.
Brave knight, my son a battle lost
To thee, with many gain'd may boast :
With thee, he, in his course to fame,
May long confess a second name ;
For thou, whate'er thy line or land,
Art stamp'd renown by Nature's hand.

The chieftain ceas'd : and to reply
The stranger seem'd address'd ;
When suddenly on every eye
A brighter object press'd.
The beauteous Inva, who, subdu'd
By fear, the fight had anxious view'd,
Now all from her alarm reliev'd,
For having wrong'd the stranger, grieved :
And in her pleasure's sudden glow
Bent him some special grace to show,
With looks benign the lovely maid
Passing the warriors through,
Her gentle steed by pages led,
Near to the hero drew ;

And pulling from her arm, as fair
As snow, a chain of jewels rare ;
Scarce venturing to advance so high
As his bar'd helm her timid eye ;
From me, said she, renown'd sir knight,

 This trifle deign to wear,
In humble token of a weight

 Of gratitude sincere
That you have in a sister mov'd
By having spar'd a brother lov'd :
And wait on you may honour high,
And ev'ry sweet affection's joy,

 Through glory's bright career !
And when your earthly course shall end,
Through which may Fate from ills defend,
May Heaven its kindest angels send
 To meet you at your bier !

 The gallant stranger, bending low
In homage o'er his saddle-bow,
Receiv'd the chain, his arm uncas'd,
And plac'd it on his manly wrist,

While through his frame a tremor spread,
As all his lighter mail display'd ;
Then mildly answer'd : Lady fair,
Your honour'd favour thus I wear ;
It shall this arm, while spar'd by Fate,
To acts of greatness consecrate,
And to me a remembrance serve
This high distinction to deserve.
When, with impressive grace adorn'd,
Her steed the beauteous Inva turn'd,
And towards Methven halls withdrew,
Soon in the woodlands lost to view.
While, with her eager to conspire
In courtesy, resum'd her sire.

Thus gallant knight, we would award
To your deserts our best regard :
But now it is the day's decline,
And we for rest the field resign :
You to our castle will repair,
We trust, the evening feast to share :
Resign'd to ease, and kindly deign
With us a season to remain ;

All honour shall your stay abide.
When thus the stranger grave replied.

For such distinction, chief renown'd,
Accept my gratitude profound ;
But me, your hospitable joys
To share, a knightly vow denies ;
To arms consign'd, my trade the sword,
I fare as fields and woods afford ;
And ere I rest or make my home
In courtly hall, or lordly dome,
Yet many moons their light must waste.
Now to the Scottish court I haste,
There further, in the presence high,
My humble gifts in arms to try.

Brave knight, with aspect chang'd, replied
The chief, our court for martial pride
Renown'd, is now, we all repine,
No scene for high pursuits like thine.
Time is not long, since Scotland's court
Was knightly strangers' fit resort ;
But there rebellion forth has pour'd
Her dragons with the civil sword,

And treason rear'd its javelin dread
Against the public parent's head.
And now misrule its halls pervade,
Fall'n is its fame, its greatness fled.
Alas! I am in fault to name
In stranger's ear my country's shame.

When thus the knight. In journeying here,
Strange rumours met, indeed, my ear ;
And I the boon would highly hold
If now I fully might be told
What are, and of what causes born,
The ills you thus so deeply mourn :
To those who arms profess, belongs
To know of states the fame and wrongs ;
And I, in travelling nations o'er,
Their histories love in mind to store.

To which the chief:—Brave knight, we fear
The tale you ask will wound your ear ;
But yielding to your fair request,
Here on the heath a time we'll rest,
And you of those events of wo
A further brief detail shall know.

He called his bard ; who straight appear'd,
Rev'rend with hoary hair and beard,
But eyes that fire of soul express'd :
When thus the chieftain him address'd.

Relate, O bard of Oran-Morn !
The griefs which late have Scotland torn,
Speak forth the fates to which we owe
Our past, and fears of future wo ;
The theme, to us, is fraught with pain,
But let not sorrow mar the strain ;
The noble stranger seeks to hear,
Speak with expression worthy of his ear.

END OF CANTO FIRST.



CANTO II.

The minstrel heard ; with eyes of fire
He threw his fingers o'er his lyre ;
Upon a bank with heather crowned
He stood, the chiefs reclin'd around ;
When wildly rais'd to heaven the man
Of song his eyes, and thus began :

Where are the great, the mighty gone ?
Prepare the tide of grief to pour —

The pride and hope of Albyn's throne,*
The sons of Malcolm, are no more.
'Reav'd of their sire ere yet they knew
Their loss, at court the princes grew,

* Albyn, the name anciently given by the Scots to their country.

And soon of King Indolphus won
Like love with Culenus his son ;
And as in studies, hopes, and years,
The three young princes thus were peers,
So joined their loves ; and with their youth
Their friendship grew in strength and truth.
But ere they thus had fully grown
To years mature, of Albyn's throne
The triple hope, fierce Cimbria pour'd *
Upon our shores her bands abhorr'd,
And King Indolphus, prompt to save
His country, found a timeless grave.

He fallen ; Prince Duphus, Malcolm's son
First born, succeeded to the throne ;
And scarce was power to him assigned,
When, gratefully, he bent his mind
To yield to King Indolphus' son ;
Like grace his sire to him had shewn ;
And Culen held through all the land,
Next to himself, the chief command.

* Cimbria, now Denmark.

King Duphus' * brother, Kenneth, held
His equal love ; and, pleas'd, beheld
Him thus his utmost grace extend
Towards their childhood's mutual friend ;
But rapt in deep research of mind
Himself the cares of power declin'd.
For Kenneth had been early drawn
The kingdom's institutes to scan ;
And searching them with reverend awe
He in them certain errors saw,
Which, if he ere to power attain'd,
He vow'd to labour to amend :
And that he might his mind supply
With knowledge meet for aims so high,
Was bent to foreign lands to stray
To learn their arts of sovereign sway.

The king, in fond fraternal love,
His brother's purpose strove to move,

* King Duphus. I have here ventured on poetical licence so far as to alter this king's name, which, in the history, is spelt Duffus, to Duphus, as, in my opinion, sounding more accordant to poetry.

But nought could his resolves subdue ;
And guis'd an humble knight, with two
Attendants which the kingdom chose,
That more might not his rank disclose,
He on his travels pass'd away,
The search of wisdom to essay.
And now, alas ! the glorious sun
Five times his annual course has run,
Since Kenneth, full of promise fair,
Through foreign dangers went to fare ;
While Albyn hears of him no more,
And we, as lost, the prince deplore.
Alas ! had he return'd and brought
The wiser laws for which he sought,
He from our country might have borne
The ills that lately it have torn,
And staid our still portentous fears.
Thus sung the bard with bursting tears,
For he had Kenneth known and loved,
And, save the stranger, all were mov'd.

Thus, rapt in patriot grief, his song
The minstrel staid ; but paus'd not long,

When, with returning fire imbued,
His rushing theme he thus renewed :

But now at court while state affairs
Engaged King Duphus' virtuous cares,
By sudden posts he knowledge gain'd
That rapines dread th' Æbudæ stain'd :
For Rognwald, from Pomona's shore,
Appalling as the whirlpools roar,
Had pass'd the sea in dark array,
And made the Western Isles his prey.
And Rognwald, highly through the north
Allied, had in his train led forth
The sons of many kindreds great,
Who, tired of order in the state,
And heated by their passions wild,
For strife and lawless outrage boiled ;
And who in bands from isle to isle
Now roam'd exacting mail or spoil,
And, not their fury thus assuag'd,
In every nameless violence raged.

The king, incens'd that such a stain
Should blot the dawning of his reign,

Commanded that there straight be led
Meet force to quell the daring raid ;
And Culen, eager to sustain
His king and friend's insulted reign,
Soon with a band resistless sail'd
And everywhere the ravage quell'd ;
When of the robbers low and vile
He many sent into exile :
But those who had the ravage led
For judgment more severe he staid,
And held them prisoners to await
The king's decision on their fate.

And now to Scoon the joyous fame
Of Culen's brave achievement came :
But when the king, already wroth,
Had more of the rebellion's growth
Inquired, and found that some of birth
And rank, the highest in the north,
Were 'mongst its chiefs and leaders nam'd,
His anger into fury flam'd.
Is this ! cried he, the law's return
From those its institutes adorn

With honour, power, and high degree ;
With lands and holds ? it shall not be !
For heaven, and for the laws, I wear
This kingdom's sword ; and I will bear
Its equal edge on high and mean !
Be armed tomorrow ! every thane,
For we with you will then set forth
To meet those traitors in the north :
For there, where they are widely known,
T' atone their wrongs to justice done
They more conspicuously will fall
Its victims, as they surely shall !

Thus spoke the king : but to dissuade
Him from his course his lords essayed ;
Let not the king, they joined in prayer,
Proceed on such a dangerous care ;
The kingdom's health in him repos'd
Ill brooks to be in feuds exposed :
The kindreds of the numerous band
Which Culen has exil'd the land,
Already of injustice cry,
And mutterings of resentment try ;

And if the friends and families great
Of those whose crimes a darker fate
Demand, like feud should entertain,
Commotions dread the north may stain.
Here, then, in Scoon's fair wood embrac'd
We pray the king will calmly rest ;
While others shall alike pursue
To their deserts the lawless crew.

Thus to dissuade the king they tried :
When he, in duty bold, replied :
My faithful nobles deeply move
Me by their loyal care and love ;
But, in the north, if traitors threat
To plunge in fratricide the state,
My presence shall their rage allay,
And dark revolt in gendering stay :
Heaven, who the sovereign office lends
To kings, the faithful king defends ;
In heaven, and in my people, trust
I fearless ; to the north I must !
I, too, in Moray's thane, the tried
And trusty Donald, can confide ;

His worth was vouch'd in Buchan's plains
With King Indolphus, 'gainst the Danes,
And on his loyalty and faith
Has never fallen suspicion's breath :
And should the feuds you fear prevail,
We shall with him, in high Dunphail,
Secure as well a strong recess
As aids rebellion to repress.

The faithful lords with sadness hear
Their sovereign, but replies forbear.
Heralds to Culen straight proceed
With charge that he to Moray lead
His captives, and in Calder towers
Them lodge and guard with all his powers,
When to repose the court withdrew.
But with the king, to duty true,
Ere morn obscur'd the western star,
From Scoon departed for Braemar ;
And woods and mighty summits cross'd,
Two days unhalting, nor repos'd
Till Cluanaida's mountain towers
The third invites their wearied powers

On Albyn's highest peaks to rest,
In her primeval woods embrac'd.

At morn, with giant Gorm in view,
High Loch-na-gar, and Binn-muich-dhu,
The fathers of the topaz fair
And emerald, clothed sublime in air,
The king and court pursu'd their way
Through high Braemoray, on Strathspey.
But as the rising morning spread
More copious light through glen and glade,
Near their descending route, between
The woods, the glance of arms was seen,
And as the royal train a strath
Were entering, forward in their path
Mac-Cormac, of the silver beard,
A loyal mountain-chief, appear'd.

His warders right and left he drew ;
And, when the king advanced in view
With bended knee he homage paid,
And with submissive reverence said :
God give King Duphus long to reign ;
For lands which here to me pertain

I come to pay the fealty due
By subject to the sovereign true.
And further, on a liege-man's faith,
I come to warn the king that skaith
May follow, if he persevere
Thus slackly arm'd in progress here ;
For some in Moray, others forth
From Caithness, Ross, and all the north,
Of kin to those who have rebell'd,
Have here their nightly plottings held,
And claim their banish'd friends restor'd,
Or threaten some revenge abhorr'd.

The king with eager eye and ear
Observ'd the trusty mountaineer ;
And while his mind with anger blaz'd,
Round on his courtiers he gaz'd,
And cried : My thanes ! this goes to shew
Your tidings from the north were true.
But, yearly, Moray's air, of late,
Has gendered flies to taint the state ;
Yet, haply, now the time avails
To crush the hornets in their cells.

To Forres castle, now possess'd
By trusty Donald, let us haste,
And from his loyal truth and love
Learn fully how those treasons move.
Which said, the court pursu'd their way,
And Forres reach'd at fall of day,
Received, in absence of the thane,
By Donald's lady and her train,
With smiles and blandishments, address'd
To all, but pour'd upon her royal guest.

But here the minstrel seem'd to rouse
To sudden rage ; he smote his brows
As if his soul were rapt away
To some dread climax in his lay ;
Then sunk he seem'd in anguish strong,
His tuneful hand as palsied hung,
And, overpower'd he seem'd constrain'd
His theme, unfinish'd, there to end.
But great Rodardus, seated near,
Reprov'd his fault and gave him cheer ;
The stranger, also, watchful who
Had mark'd his tale, him to pursue

It, kind besought ; when thus by strong
Entreaties won, the bard resum'd his song.

The lady thus by show of love
To gain the youthful monarch strove ;
By ceaseless flatteries him caress'd,
To all his mind her arts address'd.
But loyalty had not the dame
Inspir'd ; she had a deeper aim :
The leaders in th' Æbudean fray,
To justice now upon their way,
Were all to her in blood allied ;
And Lady Githa's lineal pride
Rul'd paramount o'er all the kind
Affections wont to woman's mind ;
Hence strove she with her love's excess
The youthful monarch to impress,
In hope that for the rebel train
She thus would royal pardon gain.

Meanwhile the thane, of duty's calls
Absolved, return'd to Forres' halls,
And met the king with homage due ;
But Donald's loyalty was true,

Though he was also proud, and drawn
By strong devotion to his clan.

But Culen now, dispensing dread
Through all the north, arriv'd, and laid
In Calder towers his captive train
The law's denouncements to sustain ;
And quickly Lady Githa's ear
The tidings reached ; when, wrung with fear
And rage, she, for them to invoke
Forgiveness, thus her husband spoke.*

Your high deserts my lord belov'd,
The king's regards have justly mov'd ;
But see, the flower of both our lines
In Calder under sentence pines !

* The lady here introduced is one of the fierce female characters of which Scotland, in earlier times, produced so many instances ; more, indeed, is said in history of her fury and violence than is said of Lady Macbeth ; and it is evident that from the sequel of this story Shakespeare drew many of the incidents relating to his fall of King Duncan, in the tragedy of Macbeth.

Go to the king, and with him try
Your interest that they may not die ;
For sure our prayers if now we use,
To pardon them he cannot choose.
When Donald, for the rebel train,
Though true himself, who suffer'd pain,
Applauded and embrac'd the thought,
And, confident, the monarch sought ;
But quickly in dismay return'd,
And said, the king, enrag'd, had spurn'd
His suit, and that, remed'less, all
Their friends must on the morrow fall.

The lady scarce her fury staid,
But mark'd his frowns, and, scoffing said :
So ! thus you are to be repaid
The blood you for the state have shed ?
Your truth rewarded, in your name
And kindred given to deaths of shame ?
But tales shall be tomorrow told
Of more than Calder's dungeons hold !
For me ! I will my kind abjure,
And in some cave myself immure,

No more to meet the galling eye
Of man, if thus my kinsmen die !
Off ! off ye gauds ! be mine no more !
And from her neck her robes she tore,
Her gems and jewels scattered round,
And frantic sunk upon the ground
Like maniac wild, with streaming hair,
And gushing tears, she feign'd despair.

Her frantic rage to terror mov'd
The thane, for her he fondly loved ;
And bending o'er her, Stay ! he cried,
Stay ! wife, beloved, your sorrow's tide ;
There is no death I would not brave
Our kindred from their doom to save,
But hosts in arms their prisons bay,
And what can we their fates to stay ?

What ! what can we ? she furious cried,
Must I for you device provide ?
O ! Donald, Donald ! in yon towers
There lies no noble friend of ours
But would for you, if like him placed,
Lay cities, towns, and districts waste,

And save you ! if to do 't the road
Lay through a rushing sea of blood !
But you for kings with fealty pine,
Like sickly maid, while from your line,
The fountain of your blood ! your clan !
Your love, a traitor ! is withdrawn.

What ? this from thee ! with fury cried
The chief ; when she, like fierce, replied :
Aye ! slay me, thane ! the act would pair
Most nobly with your other care
For that high line, renown'd and long,
Of nobles whence I hapless sprung ;
And, saying, shed again a tide
Of tears : when Donald, softening, cried —
No more, sweet love, no more upbraid !
But say, hast thou device will aid
Our friends ? if so, though hell should cry,
Desist ! I'll their deliverance try.

Ha ! wilt thou ? cried the dame, and strove
To mould her rage to looks of love,

If so ! through Culen's bands to-night
Our way to Calder we shall fight,
And, in our course, though thick the road
Be guarded, shed but little blood.
I have two trusty aids in sight :
We give the court a feast to-night ;
And after, when at midnight deep
All eyes are sealed by leaden sleep,
If thou wilt follow, as the way
I'll point, our kindred's fates we'll stay ;
For of the state, when lopp'd the head,
The body's acts, perforce, are staid ;
And Culen, who the next must reign,
A woman's suit will ever gain.
But be the banquet now my care,
While you shall to the king repair,
And under an impervious smile
Suspicion's eagle eye beguile,
Till season meet to action call,
When thou shalt know my project all.
Which said, herself she re-adorn'd,
And to the king and lords return'd

The thane, with subtle smiles and ease,
And more than wont intent to please.

But evening soon the world o'ercast ;
The welcome season of repast
Came on ; the banquet rose benign ;
The host and hostess urged the wine ;
And high amidst the noble guests
The youthful monarch joyous feasts,
While mirthful converse entertains
Alternate with the minstrel's strains ;
Till, lulling sense with Lethean weight,
Arose the central cope of night ;
When all, by wine or sleep oppress'd,
Or pass'd, or seem'd to pass, to rest :
And over Forres' towers again
Old silence re-assumed its reign ;
Till, painting heaven and earth anew,
The east its golden curtains drew.

But of its radiance long the morn,
Warring with angry clouds, was shorn ;
And slow, from their abridg'd repose,
And late, the easy courtiers rose.

But after long they all had met,
As wont, upon the king to wait;
He came not to the presence hall,
Nor had th' attendants heard his call:
And when the lords, by duty press'd,
Sent to invite him from his rest,
The messengers return'd and told
'The king was risen, his couch was cold,
The grooms surcharg'd with wine, and none
Knew when he rose, or where he might be gone.

The monarch's absence, undefin'd,
Mov'd variously each courtier's mind;
Some stood surmising, some, aghast,
T' explore the royal chamber pass'd;
And Donald first in every place
Seem'd most the mystery bent to trace;
At length, when further search seem'd vain,
Two warders of the castle-train
Sought audience of the court, and said—
That scarce the banquet's mirth had stay'd,
When to their ward, the southern gate,
The king, as if with wine elate,

Advanc'd, and said he pass'd to Scoon,
And that his train would follow soon ;
And this they had not earlier shewn
As judging it by all was known.

This strange report all minds engag'd ;
But Donald, 'gainst his guards enrag'd
For having forth to danger pass'd
The king, his sense by wine o'ercast,
Began them fiercely to upbraid,
And scarce from slaying them was stay'd.
But now, from first alarm and pain
At length arous'd, the courtier train
Cried, one and all, to horse ! to horse !
And leaving Forres with a force
From Culen claim'd, they east, and west,
And south, to Scoon the kingdom trac'd,
But far as search they could extend,
No tidings of the king they gain'd.

Fill'd now with sorrow and dismay,
The lords of court no more delay ;
But, that the laws might be sustain'd,
To all the states they heralds send ;

And many nobles, to debate
The strange dilemma, quickly met :
And Culen, leaving all his powers
To guard his charge in Calder's towers,
Arrived, to act, in things extreme,
As regent, in King Duphus' name ;
Till where concealed, or if withdrawn
He was to foreign lands, by time was shewn.

Meanwhile from Donald posts came on
To learn what of the king was known ;
With notice that he had, with pain,
All Moray search'd for him in vain ;
And if he yet had not appear'd
At Scoon, that he, with sorrow, fear'd
That on the night when the supine
And sluggish guards he pass'd, in wine,
He had, in darkness, miss'd his way,
And sunk in the impetuous Spey.
That he the kingdom's loss condol'd,
But trusted grief would be controll'd
In that Prince Culen had attain'd
The years when sovereigns wisely reign'd ;

That Moray's ferments when allay'd,
He would himself their counsels aid,
And strive the public griefs to heal
As best they might for Albyn's weal.

The States to Donald's message fair
With gloomy silence lent an ear ;
And, though the looks of some express'd
That doubtings dark their minds possess'd,
The thane had of the kingdom gain'd
Such high regard, and still retain'd,
That those whose minds suspicions wrung
Yet paus'd to give their thoughts a tongue.
And, as King Duphus might have met,
Indeed, in lake or stream his fate,
And hope, though deeply mix'd with fear,
Remain'd he yet might reappear ;
The States the regency confirm'd
On Culen ; and, his council form'd,
Too easy to their lands withdrew,
To wait events that might ensue.

But sovereign Heaven, which from on high
Looks down with all-observing eye,

And, when a good king basely falls,
For dreadful retribution calls ;
Now, spreading terror and alarm,
O'er Albyn stretch'd its venging arm :
Strange fires were in the heavens array'd,
Darkness the sun and moon o'erspread,
Terrific thunders ceaseless roll'd,
Earth shook, and winds infernal howl'd ;
And thus, a time, with scarce the day
From night distinguish'd, pass'd away.*

At length to Culen it was given
To know the awful voice of heaven,
Commanding him to rouse, and straight
Explore the king's mysterious fate ;
When all the love and friendship kind
By Duphus shewn him rush'd to mind,
And fill'd his soul, at the belief
That he had foully fallen, with rage and grief.
When secretly to join his band,
By nightly marches, Moray land

* The history says, " for six whole months neither sun nor moon were seen in the heavens."

He reach'd, and, yet ere Donald knew,
As deem'd the prince, round Forres drew.
But secret march as he had made,
Amaz'd, he found the thane had fled
On board an alien ship that lay
For casual traffic in the bay ;
When of his guilt, conjecture, light
Before, attain'd o'erwhelming height.

But thus suspicion highly rais'd,
The castle straight the regent seiz'd ;
And laid the warders fast in hold
Who of the king's departure told.
The wife of Donald next he sought ;
And forth in frowning pride was brought
The awful dame, to her unknown,
That, pleading guilt, her lord had flown.
But, 'mid the people shouting scorn,
She, with the guards, to test was borne ;
When, at the dreadful rack's display,
Seiz'd mutually with wild dismay,
And by the dread of torture press'd,
They, each accusing each, confess'd

That, on the banquet night, when lain
To his repose, the king was slain ;
That he by Donald's weapons bled,
Urged by his wife, and was convey'd
For burial to a hidden ground
Where never might his corse be found.

The heinous treason thus confess'd,
The monarch's mangled form was trac'd ;*
And swath'd with many a loyal tear,
For meet and holy sepulchre.
And those obsequies due perform'd,
The parricides were all inform'd
That they their treason must atone
By death, before the setting sun.
Which sentence scarce was on them pass'd
When rose a storm, and, by the blast,

* The king's body was found buried under a little bridge in a by-place near the abbey of Kinloss, the green turf being laid over it, so that there might be no marks of the ground having been dug up.

The ship in which the thane had flown
From justice, back to land was thrown ; *
And Donald, with his fellows, met
His awful crime's demanded fate ;
As did, on the succeeding day,
The outlaws who in Calder lay.

Thus fell, exclaim'd the bard, with tears,
King Duphus in his blooming years ;
And thus, in him, and Kenneth lost
In foreign lands, from us has pass'd
A line of kings whose patriot sway
Was virtue's shield and guilt's dismay :
And how their loss we shall bewail
Already dark forebodings tell ;
For Culen, who, for vigour shewn
In Moray's treasons, gain'd the throne,
And now is king, alas ! betrays
The promise of his earlier days ;
Of vice and folly sinks the prey,
And stains the grace of kingly sway.

* This incident is also correct to historical authority.

O! that he may betimes advise
And guide his reign by counsel wise ;
His youth with due discretion bear,
And change to joy the kingdom's fear :
When, ending thus his solemn lay,
The minstrel sadly stalk'd away.

Nor did the ancient bard bemoan
The virtuous Duphus' fall alone ;
At its relation every chief
Express'd by tears or sighs his grief.
Nor did the stranger knight, who, bent
Upon his shield, had earnest lent
To all the theme attentive ear,
Seem with a slight regard to hear ;
Nay, melted by the tragic lay,
Or by sweet pity borne away,
He, when King Duphus' fate was told,
Seem'd mov'd by sorrow uncontroll'd ;
The sob of grief, with sudden start,
That bursts from the unwilling heart,
By no endeavour to be stayed,
Oft from his heaving bosom fled ;

Even so, that oft he seem'd to share
A deeper grief than any there.
But when the bard a time had ceas'd,
He calmly Methven thus address'd.

Brave chieftain ! for your minstrel's lays
You have my thanks, and he my praise ;
Never a theme my hearing met
Has mov'd me like King Duphus' fate.
Alas ! how little cause we find
To envy those who rule mankind.
But less it grieves me not to hear
You his successor view with fear :
Errs, then, King Culen in his reign ?
When, gravely, thus replied the thane.

Brave knight, King Culen, since the throne
He held, has often wisely done ;
But lately, he the prudence grave
Has lack'd, which seems the state to crave,
And anarchy, with lighted brand,
Again broods o'er our fated land ;
Yet he, we trust, will soon again
Take counsel and with vigour reign.

But now the star of vespers threw
Its flame through ether's deep'ning blue ;
And Methven and his chiefs, address'd
To seek the castle halls for rest,
Again, with many court'sies fair,
The stranger press'd their feast to share ;
But he, as at the first, by kind
Replies their friendly suit declin'd ;
And, with his squire, though in degree
More than a menial squire seem'd he,
Turning towards the open way
That east to Scoon and Bertha lay,
Departed, each his eager steed
Impelling to its utmost speed ;
And Methven and his chiefs were all
Soon feasting gleeful in his lordly hall.

CANTO III.

SWEET are of youth the smiling hours
When glows the heart with new-born powers,
And fancy opes her golden bowers

To hope's pellucid ray ;

Ere yet the fretful passions scowl,
Or crosses sear the generous soul,
Or injuries, wrought by vices foul,

Oercast its sunny day.

And thus, in Methven's lordly towers,
Now beauteous Inva pass'd her hours,
In all the pleasing joys that soothe
The smiling spring of duteous youth ;
And, all by destiny caress'd,
Seem'd born to bless and to be bless'd.
Though yet the youthful fair had been
By few beyond her lineage seen,

Since she to perfect years had grown,
Fame of her beauty far had flown,
And many noble chieftains strove
For leave to proffer her their love.

But bold in wealth and lineal fame,
Now Angus, Ænias' chieftain came,
And, clothed in smiles and courtesies bland,
Of her in marriage made demand.
Angus was fair of form and young,
High born, and of alliance strong ;
His vast domains extended lay
Even from the northern Esk to Tay,
And from the Grampians westward, he
Held homage to the eastern sea.
The lands his ancestor receiv'd
From royal Alpine's son, who reav'd
Them, by his aid, in Scotland's hour
Of peril, from the Pictish power.
O ! had his sires, with wealth and birth,
Entail'd upon their heir their worth !
But he to rank and splendour join'd
A dark, debas'd, and baleful mind.

Such Angus' fame. But public fame
He scorn'd ; and now to Methven came,
Accomplished in pomp and pride,
That e'en with royal splendour vied.
And as the thane his greatness knew,
He rendered him the welcome due.
The feast was spread, and, 'midst the sound,
Of mirth and music, circled round
The wine with bounty unrestrain'd,
And welcome and profusion reign'd.
And thus, for then the festive joys
Knew not the stinted hour's alloys ;
Three days with mirth and sport arose,
Three nights with banqueting were crown'd,
And, save in hours of brief repose,
Rung Methven's halls with pleasure's sound.

But there's a joy that gives the feast
And mirthful hour a higher zest
Than all that viands most benign,
Or sparkling wit, or generous wine,
Can yield to hearts with feeling warm ;
That secret, soul-inspiring charm

Is in the presence of the fair,
And was not Methven's guests to share ;
For beauteous Inva had not cheer'd
The feast when the fourth morn appear'd.
The lovely maid, retired, alone,
Had, from the first, been seen by none ;
For Angus' fame had reach'd her ear,
And she avoided him with fear.

He felt the slight with dudgeon high,
But bore it with unalter'd eye ;
For more he sought the maid, to prove
His power and influence, than from love.
And, as her merits had not led,
Her scorn could not his aims dissuade ;
For, trusting in his house's fame,
His high descent, and powerful name,
Now with her sire, he pass'd aside,
And proudly claim'd her as his bride.

The chief, who knew his youth was stain'd
By crimes, in mind his suit disdain'd ;
And his alliance to deny
Was fix'd ; but view'd his station high.

And urg'd his fond paternal fears
Of Inva's tender mind and years,
As causes meet to bar his voice
As yet against her marriage choice.
Express'd reluctance to decline
A match so worthy of his line ;
But, as he held his guests' degree
In honour, spoke his judgment free.

With firm, and still unalter'd eye,
Angus receiv'd the thane's reply.
But calling forth his train in haste,
He took a stern adieu ;
And, burning in his gloomy breast
With secret rage, withdrew.
Mute through the castle forest vast,
Amid his silent band he pass'd ;
But, having reach'd a distant height,
Whence Methven's towers were still in sight,
He turn'd, and from his bosom tore
His cross, and drew his sword,
And, witness'd by his clansmen, swore
To Heaven by oath abhorr'd,

For that affront and stain upon
His house and rank by Methven thrown,
His friendship for him thence to change
 To hatred, ne'er to cease,
Till he had had some dire revenge
 On him, or on his race.

So Angus vow'd : then bent his way
To Birnam, where King Culen lay,
Amusing in the forest chase,
Or yielding to luxurious ease.
For there, unmindful of the state,
Now long the king had held retreat,
Amid the revelries and noise
Of rude volupt'rys and their joys.
And when to join them Angus came,
All welcom'd him with loud acclaim.
For, late his wit and splendid port
Had gain'd him high regard at court ;
And he, indeed, surpass'd in grace
Of manners, and the arts that please,
All Scotland's nobles of his time,
Far as he pass'd them all in crime.

Hence had the prudent seen, with fear,
His influence in the royal ear.
And now, events with speed declar'd
That such presentments had not err'd.
For, when he join'd the courtier throng,
With revels new the palace rung,
By his alluring manners drawn,
The youthful king regardless ran
Headlong into licentious joys,
And publicly dissolv'd in vice.
And while his folly thus traduc'd
The throne, the kingdom's youth, seduc'd
By his example, scorning fame
And honour, sunk in equal shame.

Meanwhile, the prostituted race
Of parasites and flatterers base,
Who throng'd the court, with uncontroll'd
And fulsome strains the king extoll'd;
Proclaim'd him as ordain'd by fate
To give new splendour to the state;
As first of monarchs who had join'd
Authority with taste refin'd.

And while his flatterers, insincere,
Abus'd his weak, unwary ear,
The king deceiv'd, the crew unblest'd
Advanc'd in grace, and more caress'd;
His royal trusts and state commands
He plac'd in strange adventurer's hands;
And turn'd on men, in wisdom old,
A deaf'ning ear and aspect cold.

But now the nobles, grave and wise,
Whose worth surviv'd the general vice,
Mov'd by the doom that seem'd to threat
The tottering and neglected state,
With hope by counsel to reclaim
Their erring king, to Birnam came.
Great Methven, long whose power had sway'd
In council, and in action led,
First of the train, by grief subdu'd,
Before the fallen monarch stood.
The Graeme, and Lothian, names endear'd
Long to his line, the next appear'd;
Their service in his father's reign
Gave hope their presence now might gain

And draw his mind from vices base,
By memory of his mighty race.
Next brave Macduff, whose patriot zeal
To guard the throne and public weal,
With every rising danger rose,
Stood forth to stay the public woes.
Next in the patriot train were Mar,
And Murdo, both renown'd in war.
And with them many others came,
Of noble rank, and ancient name.

When thus the virtuous chiefs stood forth,
All great in rank as well as worth,
Though Culen scarcely shame conceal'd,
He of compunction nought reveal'd ;
For sternly, and with angry eyes
He view'd them, and, in feign'd surprise,
Inquired what duty of the state
Had brought them thus to a retreat,
Where, in retirement for a space,
He sought from public cares release.
When Methven thus, with voice depress'd
By grief, their mutual prayer express'd :

Sovereign of Albyn! rightful heir
Of many kings, profound the care
That draws your faithful nobles near,
Thus suppliant to your royal ear!
Late on this fam'd and loyal land,
Your reign with blissful promise dawn'd;
Crimes from your vigorous justice fled,
And Scotland in her king was glad.
But now, O prince! fierce rapine stains
Again our peaceful vales and plains,
Th' authority of law decays,
And violence on the 'fenceless preys.
The kingdom's youth, who should be train'd
Her ancient glories to defend,
Arms and the arts of war despise,
And revel in inglorious vice.
And shall we, sire, environ'd by foes,
Thus blindly with destruction close?
Shall in our hands those honours fade,
For which our sires for centuries bled?
Shall we resign to alien spoil
This hallow'd land! this sacred soil!
Which, ever free! has brav'd th' alarms
Of all the circling world in arms?

No ! let our sovereign, then, resign
Inglorious joys and sloth supine,
And guard his councils and his ear
'Gainst speculators insincere.
Let him the manage of the state
Resume, and Scotland's fears defeat :
And we, whose greatness with the throne
Arose, and with its growth has grown,
Shall ne'er be wanting to sustain
And lead him to a glorious reign.

While Methven spoke, the king, with ear
Attentive, seem'd his words to hear.
But, by the admonition high
Unmov'd, thus lightly made reply.
Methven, and nobles all, with fair
Regard we view your loyal care.
And true it is, that, with the gay
And youthful, we have pass'd in play
Seasons and leisure hours, of late
Remitted by the cares of state.
Thus much we freely own, to prove
Our sense of your well-meaning love.

But we have to the kingdom's youth
Thus lent the rein, because, in truth,
We do not hold it wise to school,
T' attempt to fetter, and to rule
Youth's generous and aspiring rage
By maxims of abated age.
We hold in memory, as must you,
The ills our predecessor drew
Upon his reign by laws severe,
And we his rigours shun with fear.
But deem our nobles that the joys
In which we have indulged, destroys
The pride of arms ? that pleasures bliss —
Th' ambitions of renown depress ?
If so, securely we aver
That there, though else most wise, they err ;
For, all heroic records prove
That valour is the child of love.
Then, let our faithful chiefs repine
No more the state's surmis'd decline ;
Our rising race, we trust, aspires
To match in martial fame their sires ;
And will, when call their country's needs,
We fear not, vouch our words by deeds.

As stood aloof th' apostate dread,
When first his frauds mankind betray'd,
Flouting, with an infernal smile,
Heaven, and the victims of his guile ;
So Angus, at the king's reply,
Stood rapt in baleful pleasure by.
Meanwhile the chiefs, who, from the strain
Of Culen, deem'd all council vain,
To shun the ills that might accrue
From fit rejoinder, mute withdrew.
Yet griev'd to leave their king the sport
Of vice, still tarried near the court,
With hope some happier hour to find
To rouse to nobler sense his mind.

Thus hoped the patriots still to gain
The king to honour, but in vain.
For now the recreant crew who wrong'd
His youth, again around him throng'd ;
And he, content to be deceiv'd,
Them to his heart again receiv'd.
But Angus, whose excelling skill
In wit and whim, suppli'd him still

With mirth ; and, in their nightly rites,
Who oft to his debas'd delights
Paus'd not to play the pander base.
Stood highest in his love and grace ;
His inmost secrets constant shar'd,
And every day was more preferr'd.

Thus Angus held in Culen's grace
Of all the court inglorious place.
But still his baleful mind was torn
By his revenge on Methven sworn,
For beauteous Inva, to his pride
Late by the virtuous thane denied,
And when him now again he view'd
At court, and memory had renew'd
His hate ; a scheme of vengeance dread
Rush'd on his thoughts ; and, in its aid
By lure of pleasure to employ
The king, he vow'd with speed to try.

Dark was his aim ; and the regard
Of all the land for Methven, barr'd
His way ; but, rancours that impell'd
Him onward, soon o'er fear prevail'd.

And when the king, at day's decline,
Was, at the banquet, warm'd by wine ;
While pouring foul effusions forth,
As wont, to his voluptuous mirth,
With subtlety resolv'd to prove
The place of Methven in his love,
He ply'd his wit to turn to jeer
His counsels faithful and sincere ;
And dar'd to make the absent thane
His ridicule and jest profane :
And when he saw that Culen bore
The sport, and oft the boisterous roar
Of laughter at his mockeries join'd ;
Secure that Methven in his mind
To favour had no special claim,
He hasted to his darker aim.

Pass'd from the chieftain, he the crew
Of revellers to his daughter drew ;
And now, with voice and ardour rais'd,
He Inva's passing beauty prais'd.
Extoll'd her as above compare,
Or like 'mongst women counted fair ;

Detail'd her charms, in strains that glow'd
With fires, and with effusions flow'd,
Whose breath profane must here forbear
The pure approach of virtue's ear ;
But when he saw the king on fire
With guilty passion and desire,
Him, by a private sign, he drew,
Apart from the inebriate crew ;
And, in effusions base and rude,
The beauteous Inva's praise renew'd ;
Again her heavenly form profan'd
By foul eulogiums ; and maintain'd
That she, with all her matchless charms,
Might, if he listed, bless his arms ;
For, with his presence to command,
In an adventure he had plann'd,
Ere twice the stag had left his lair,
He would from Methven bear the fair,
And place her safe in secret bower,
A smiling captive in his power.

The king, of joys impure the slave,
To the insidious tempter gave

An eager ear, and straight agreed
To aid in the atrocious deed.
When baleful Angus brief disclos'd
His daring project ; which propos'd
That now, while Methven lay at court
Secure, they, as entic'd by sport,
Should singly, and unarm'd, repair
To Invar woods ; and, gathering there,
From the marauders fierce who stay
For travellers on the northern way,
A daring band ; them, fill'd with greed
Of spoil, by night to Methven lead :
And while the robber band surpris'd
The castle, they should, close disguis'd,
Amid the tumult of the raid,
Bear off, as friends, the trembling maid :
And ere th' alarm or morning rose,
Her in a safe retreat dispose.

For bright design, and virtue bold,
The fated king the plot extoll'd ;
Pledg'd secrecy, and fix'd the day
To follow for the dark essay,

But fate, which to a sovereign end
Oft moves through human crimes, restrain'd
That day th' attempt : for at the court
Morn rose with dark and ominous port.
The faithful chiefs who saw, with pain,
Hope to reclaim the king was vain,
Had, after long and grave debate,
Resolv'd to leave him to his fate.
And, lest their presence might afford
A warrant to the acts abhorr'd
Which stain the court, while fenceless lay
Their lands the lawless spoilers' prey ;
They muster'd all their numerous trains,
And each retir'd to his domains.
And great Rodardus, griev'd his care
Could not the kingdom's ills repair,
Soon with his guardian presence cheer'd
And fill'd with joy his halls endear'd.

Thus, from King Culen pass'd away
The strength and glory of his sway ;
Yet when of the event appris'd,
Blind to his errors, he rejoic'd.

For though his mind with fury boil'd,
That Angus' plot had thus been foil'd,
To be releas'd from men who aw'd
His wonted riots he was glad.
And now, with nothing to restrain,
He threw to his desires the rein,
And, midst his minions, sunk supine
In sensual pleasures, sloth, and wine.
But Angus's vindictive rage,
No change could cool, no time assuage,
For, on the failure of the blow
By which he hop'd to pierce his foe,
Like fires, when 'gainst their courses beat
The winds, 'twas but increas'd in heat;
And all his mind again was strain'd
In schemes to work its baleful end.

But great Rodardus, midst his powers,
Lay safely now in Methven towers,
And on his patrimonial sway,
Held crimes and fears, alike, at bay.

And now, again the wintry blast
Far to its northern caves had pass'd;

Again the zephyrs, warm and young,
Through vale and wood their odours flung ;
The vista's youthful flow'rets strew,
The Almond's stream runs clear and blue :
And, with the thousand sweets that peer
To hail the lovely rising year,
Again through Methven's woods and groves,
By buoyant spirits forth constrain'd,
Her wonted walks fair Inva roves ;
Again the falconers attend ;
And the lov'd bird her sire bestow'd,
Climbs, at her word, the airy road ;
Or perches on her shielded hand,
Duteous to either soft command.

But, on a day when thus the maid
To more than wonted distance stray'd,
Or by the woodland's beauties wild,
Or by her falcon's flight beguil'd,
And near a lonely covert drew,
A stranger came in sudden view ;
A youthful hunter, tall and fair,
Of noble mien and knightly air :

But who, as to disturb her loth,
Held courteous distance from her path ;
And, by his homage, seem'd to say,
Pass, lady, fearless on your way.

To see a stranger, nobly guis'd,
Alone in these retreats, surpris'd
The lady's train ; and she, amaz'd,
Stood fix'd, and fearful on him gaz'd.
When he, to stay her seeming high

Displeasure or alarm,
Cried, Fear not, lady, naught is nigh
That meditates thee harm.

Then, stretching from beneath his plaid
His arm, with accent soft, he said :
He who this chain is charg'd to wear,

And wears it with good will,
Its noble mistress need not fear
Can mean her hurt or ill.

When on his arm the timid maid
With wonder saw the chain display'd,
With which she grac'd the stranger knight
Admir'd at Methven's mimic fight,

Nor knew she stood again before
The brave Sir Edric of the Spur.

But oft, of him, remembrance kind,
Since then, had pass'd her youthful mind ;
Oft she, alone, had said, with pain,
Shall e'er I see that knight again ?
And now, when she the chain survey'd,
With timid blush, she mildly said —
Alas, Sir knight ! the stranger brave
To whom that chain I idly gave,
Has since, perchance at England's court,
To thee transferr'd it in his sport ;
And lightly jested of his ease
In winning silly woman's grace.

Not so ! the stranger cried amain,
He could not basely entertain
A grace so high. Fair lady, see
The knight you honour'd thus, in me !
When, on your brother's call I came,
To combat for the prize of fame,
You gave, and I will proudly hoard
This fairest trophy of my sword.

Let not my presence here offend
Against the grace I happily then obtain'd.

The noble stranger who reveal'd
Such gallant worth in Methven field,
Disclos'd, and seeming scarcely grown
To number years beyond her own,
To meet in courteous converse there,
Surpris'd and pleas'd the beauteous fair.
The honours then from all he drew,
Return'd to mind and glow'd anew;
A blush again her cheek o'erspread,
And, smiling; Good sir knight, she said —
The trinket I conferr'd to own
Your honour to my brother shewn;
You rate the silly boon too high.
But it will give my father joy
To see that thus you kindly deign
To visit these our northern lands again.
My warders through the woodlands wide
Your way shall to our castle guide,
And thither I my speed shall bend,
To see that honour meet on you attend.

Thanks, noble fair, the knight replied,
With look that thought confus'd implied,
The worth and greatness of your sire
My most sincere regards inspire ;
But pardon, lady, if I say
A softer power directs my way
Adventurous thus your woods to rove ;
And if I add that power is — love.
For know, when first, in Methven field,
I was to you in arms reveal'd,
Me thither, not the sports to view,
But your reported beauty drew ;
And when your brother nobly dar'd
The field, and I his battle shar'd,
For you, I to his honour gave
All that I could, my own to save :
On which, by your distinction grac'd,
Love's purest flame possess'd my breast.
Then give me, lady, now to hear
If I expectancy may bear ;
Or, if your love by happier thane
Be won, and I have hop'd in vain ?

He ceas'd. With blushes deep suffus'd,
The beauteous maid a moment mus'd ;
Then raising mild her lovely eyes,
With modest smile, she thus replies : —
Brave sir, the gift by men possessed,
On love with every maid to jest,
As happily the maid discreet
With conscious ear is arm'd to meet :
And I were churlish to disdain
The love which you so gaily feign.
But here, uncourteous, I delay —
Thus to our castle lies the way.
And, noble sir, whate'er may move
You thus our distant woods to rove,
You wrong yourself, when you might call
For welcome place in Methven's hall ;
And hospitable honours there
With Scotland's proudest nobles share.

Joy seem'd to light the stranger's eye,
At beauteous Inva's arch reply ;
And many knights had sigh'd in vain
Such promise of her grace to gain :

But to her proffer him to guide
To Methven, he, sad, thus replied :
Fair lady, only love sincere
Of you, again has drawn me here ;
And, while I duteous thanks prefer
For welcome to your castle fair,
'Tis meet you know, the honour'd place
You proffer'd me I ill might grace ;
For, midst the lofty nobles there,
How would a bare adventurer fare ?
No lands are mine, no proud domains,
No feudal holds, or vassal trains ;
No tinsell'd squires attend my call,
To bear my cup at board or hall ;
All sterile fate for me has stor'd
Is honour, courage, and my sword.
But what has not the sword acquir'd
By charms like thine and love inspir'd ?
In battle, have not Valour's sons
Gain'd titles, wealth, nay, often thrones ?
Then wilt thou, pledg'd to me, await
A time in arms my fortune's fate ?
Secure, if prosperous, them to share,
With kindness, truth, and love ;

And match with other knight defer
Till you that issue prove :
And to that tender compact, now
Exchange with me love's holy vow.

The gifts with which the stranger shone,
On Inva had unconscious won ;
And though she feign'd as jest to view
His suit, half wish'd it had been true ;
But when himself he thus declar'd
A nameless man, his suit preferr'd
So boldly, rous'd her conscious fear
To trust him further with her ear.
And thus, with an ingenuous mind
And pensive look, she answer'd kind.

Sir knight, that fortune is austere
To worth like thine, I grieve to hear ;
For thy heroic merit shewn
In Methven field, I needs must own,
For thee has planted in my mind
A value there to few assign'd.
But high though thy attainments be,
With knight of thy declar'd degree

I am denied, did e'en incline
My heart, in plight of love to join ;
For, from a line I hold my birth,
Rais'd high by valour, time, and worth ;
And woman, not endow'd to raise,
Should ne'er her house's rank debase.
And thus, alone, sir knight, can I
To your regarded suit reply.
But thou art valiant, and thy fame
And fortune soon may yield you claim
To other maid, who may, alas !
My feeble merits far surpass.

She said, with charms supreme adorn'd.
When thus the stranger sad return'd :
Your duty to your line and name,
Fair lady, I should err to blame ;
For I, could that afford me worth,
Might boast no mean inferior birth ;
Yet, your decree I hold severe.
But some more happy knight, I fear,
More than my fortunes, has possess'd
And shut against my suit your breast.

Love, brave sir knight, she answer'd, kind,
Has yet no tenure in my mind :
It is a labyrinth, a maze,
Where youthful maid with danger strays ;
And ever has its fame my ear
Less mov'd to pleasure than to fear.
But to our castle yet repair,
Repose and ease a space to share ;
My sire and brother, who retain
In mind your fame in Methven plain,
Will grieve should it to them be known
You pass'd so near, yet would their court'sies shun.

Thanks, noble lady, now replied
The knight, as stung by wounded pride ;
In Methven halls your friends to join
I now remed'less must decline,
To shun in scenes remote the pain
Of your severe and stern disdain.
But though to this by fate controll'd,
Place in your memory let me hold ;
And if, to me some fate severe
In war's dark rank, should reach your ear,

Remember Edric of the Spur,
Who from your hand this bracelet wore,
For you with noblest passion sigh'd,
Preferr'd his suit, and was denied.
When, with obeisance cold, the knight
Into the woods withdrew from sight ;
And Inva, in whose beauteous eyes
A tear forbidden strove to rise,
The strange encounter pondering through,
Towards the castle slowly drew ;
And, inly musing, thus in thought
Confus'd, to reason on it sought.

That knight, when Methven's tilts he join'd,
Is imag'd still upon my mind :
His mien, his steed, and proud display
In arms, on that remember'd day,
Seems with the tale he now has told
A clear accordance scarce to hold.
Is he some haughty Saxon thane,
Who, of his high attainments vain,
Has sought my ear to play a jest ?
For this his seeming meets the best ;

Yet scarce, methinks, he'd venture here
Lord Methven's daughter thus to jeer.
How must I guess? is he, indeed,
A nameless soldier, arm'd, his need
And hopes of fortune by his sword
To furnish, as declares his word?
If so, would that the day he fought
At Methven, I'd been far remote:
But though his high attainments move
Me much, and him, I fear, I love,
No passion shall my heart incline
To do dishonour to my line.
And musing thus, and pensive, through
The gates she pass'd, and to her halls withdrew.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE
RETIRED LIEUTENANT,
AND THE
BATTLE OF LONCARTY.

Poems:

By JOHN LAKE,
AUTHOR OF "THE GOLDEN GLOVE," A COMEDY, &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BATTLE OF LONCARTY.

CANTO IV.

A TIME in Methven's peaceful grove
The muse has tun'd the strain to love :
And happy, could she still, in bower
Or hall, with that delighting power,
Remain to pass the joyous day ;
But Scotland now in misery lay.
The husbandman but till'd his soil
To yield his stores the plunderer's spoil ;
The laws were openly profan'd,
And rapine unresisted reign'd.
And now, to swell the public wo,
Already heap'd to overflow,
The western Kerns, a numerous host,
Landed on Argathalia's* coast ;

* An ancient name of Argyle.

And, spoiling all that cloth'd the ground,
Spread waste and desolation round.

Dire were the miseries of the state :
And oft the patriot nobles met,
Their sorrows to each other told,
And o'er the kingdom's ills condol'd ;
But reverence for the kingly sway,
Still kept their rising rage at bay.
And sad, alone in Methven towers,
Oft great Rodardus pass'd his hours,
The deepest grief consign'd to prove,
As for his country strongest was his love.

And he the state, had it been brav'd
By war or faction, might have sav'd ;
For troubled times he oft had seen,
And still the kingdom's stay had been.
When foreign foes the land assail'd
His valour public fear dispell'd ;
When civil feuds, or faction's heat,
Perplex'd and gall'd the trembling state,
His virtue rais'd, his wisdom shone
A light and bulwark round the throne :

But now he saw, with aching eyes,
That the abandonment to vice
That Scotland's glory had defac'd,
Surpass'd his power or wisdom to arrest.

Thus would the patriot, oft alone,
His fallen country's fate bemoan.
But on a day, when thus he sat,
In sadness, musing o'er her fate,
A distant horn, with echo strong,
Shrill through the castle's vistas rung,
And quickly reach'd its massive gate
A herald, arm'd with mace of state,
Delivering letters of command
To Methven, from King Culen's hand ;
Expressing first, the king's regret
At late distractions in the state,
And trusting that again to court
Th' offended chiefs would soon resort,
With promise that their wisdom tried,
He, henceforth, more would make his guide.
Then charging Methven straight to haste,
On his allegiance, to the west,

With a sufficient warlike band,
To clear of Kerns the plunder'd land ;
And thus give vouch that he had care
The state's disorders to repair.

Great Methven, at the scroll's review,
Seem'd rous'd as to existence new ;
The hope to see the state restor'd,
With sudden joy his mind o'erpowered ;
And all his thoughts were borne away
The mandate promptly to obey :
And mustering quickly in his trains
The flower and strength of his domains,
Leaving his son and household guard,
Charg'd with the castle's watch and ward ;
He for the Argathalian coast
Soon marched with a gallant host.

The hour was sad to Inva's heart
Thus with her sire belov'd to part ;
Yet, that her brother would be near,
Gave to that painful parting cheer.
But Lord Gilwarden lov'd the chase,

And scarcely had withdrawn
His sire, when, fond the sport to trace,
He sought the forest lawn.

Sweet breath'd the breeze, the sky was clear,
Strong was the hunter, swift the deer :
And soon the 'luring joys in view,
Gilwarden far from Methven drew.

Morn pass'd, the sun his southern ray
Dispens'd, and westward stream'd the day :
But Time's escaping moments brought
No reckoning to the hunter's thought

Of distance, or his way ;
Till, pleasingly surprised, he found
The closing floods his course surround

Where Almond joins the Tay ;
Which, swell'd by winter's latter rains,
Then flooded all the adjacent plains,
And flowed o'er many a meadow, now
The empire of the bounteous plough :
When on the ground himself he cast,
And, calling for a brief repast,
Observed the fast declining day,
And homeward straight resolv'd to speed his way.

An oak, the patriarch of the wood,
O'er which the storms had centuries roar'd,
O'erthrown at length, by time subdu'd,
Was now the hunter's seat and board ;
Whence, full in view before him, lay
Wide filling all its banks, the Tay.
And there, as his repast he made,
With eye delighted, he survey'd
The hills, the straths, the woodlands green,
The river's molten-silver sheen,
Which not a breath to discompose
From all the sleeping winds arose ;
But all effulgent, bright, and gay,
In soft declining evening lay.

But now, from the opposing shore,
Alike employing sail and oar,
A little boat was seen to glide,
As bent to pass the rushing tide ;
And though it seem'd with steady course
To stem the rapid current's force,
The eddy deeps were yet before
Its course towards the purpos'd shore ;

And fear for its adventurous freight
Fix'd on it Lord Gilwarden's sight.

He saw not that, with anger red,
The sun in sudden clouds was hid ;
Mark'd not the lightning's vivid gleam
Above the distant mountain's stream ;
Nor knew how just his cause of fear,
Till, sudden, on his startled ear
Burst from a sloping woodland nigh
A female's wildly frantic cry ;
And, straight he saw a rustic maid,
With arms to heaven in anguish spread,
Rush forth, unconscious who were nigh,
And to the river margin shrieking fly.

The hunter train were instant drawn
To haste towards the strange unknown ;
Some maniac deeming her, in dream
Of frenzy, bent to perish in the stream.
But when Gilwarden nearer saw
The maid, he felt surprise and awe ;
For he before had never seen
Such loveliness in one so mean ;

And thence, with gentlest address,
He ask'd the cause of her distress :
When, mov'd not strangers there to find,
For deeper cares absorb'd her mind,
She cried, with voice to frenzy wrought,

While sobs convuls'd her beauteous form :
My father is in yonder boat !
And see you not the coming storm ?

Gilwarden now, with rapid glance,
Beheld the thick'ning clouds advance ;
And all his energy of soul
Was rous'd : but eager to console
The weeping maid, he, from such fear,
Besought her, kindly, to forbear .
Clouds dark as that, cried he, which lowers
O'er Dorgam's heights, have pass'd in showers ;
Your father is, already, more
Than half the current's eddies o'er,
And plies the oar with sturdy hand ;
Fear not ! he'll safely reach the land.

Vain hope ! again the lightnings gleam,
The clouds convolve, the ravens scream ;

Above Donarna's woody peak
The spirits of the tempest shriek !
The instant hurricane descends !
The boat before its eddy bends,
High o'er its lee the waters roar,
And, scarce a furlong from the shore,
So near a daughter's cries and tears,
A drowning father disappears.

And, doubtless, such his fate severe
Had been, but for the hunters near.
But, calling at that instant dread,
His train to follow to his aid,
Gilwarden through the rushing blast
Swift as a winged angel pass'd,
And, plunging with a fearless leap
Into the river's boiling deep,
He and his hunters reach'd, and bore
The stranger, swooning, to the shore ;
Aids to restore his powers afford ;
And to his weeping daughter him restor'd.

But greater not the daughter's joys,
Than was the hunter chief's surprise,

When he the peasant's aspect dread,
And form gigantic had survey'd ;
And on him, for a time, amaz'd,
He in abstracted silence gaz'd.
At length the man, restor'd by rest,
His high deliverer thus address'd :

Brave chief, if rightly I divine,
You are of some great neighbouring line :
And nobly you have done, indeed,
Though but a peasant's life the meed ;
For, by good acts like praise is won,
Whether to mean or noble done.
I've seen, when from my breast I've heav'd
Yon angry flood, and playful lav'd
Me in its most impetuous tide,
With fearless stretch from side to side ;
Though now some fate my arms controll'd.
But, noble sir, the night is cold,
Your garments drench'd ; our home is near,
Deign there to share our humble cheer,
Ere you pursue your homeward way ;
And let my sons their duty pay

For this deliverance ; now they come
From plough to seek their evening rest at home.

Gilwarden further to inquire
The peasant's state felt strong desire ;
So much he seem'd, as well in mind
As manners, 'yond his common kind ;
And, following him, not far remote,
Found, in a shelter'd glade, his cot ;
Where, while the beauteous daughter stor'd
With modest mien the rustic board ;
Two sons appear'd, whose forms, and fire
Of looks, denoted well their sire ;
And by the presence, tho' in speech repress'd,
They to the hunters oft their thanks express'd.

But now Gilwarden deign'd their fare
To taste ; and said, with social air :
Well, carl, your household and your lands
Speak industry and careful hands ;
But much I think in you I note
A knowledge 'yond your present lot.
Have you in cities life defin'd ?
Or, have you, travelling, learn'd mankind ?

Or have you gather'd mental store,
In hours of rest, from bookish lore ?
What chief do you attend in arms
When foreign foe the land alarms ?
What is the clan to which you claim
Affinity, and what your name ?
He who requires those points to know,
Be sure, is more your friend than foe.
When, with consenting aspect, smiled
The yeoman strong, and answered mild :

Much, noble sir, to you I owe ;
And all you ask, with welcome, know.
My farm, which you to praise have deign'd,
Thrives as my sons their duties tend ;
And of the boys I must not strain
At faults, or rig'rously complain.
Of mankind I have little known
Beyond our fields and valleys lone ;
And little am I skilled in lore :
But we have heard tradition's store.
For oft the culdee, from the waste
Press'd by the storm, is here our guest ;

And for our sheltering repays
With sage discourse of former days.
And oft the wandering minstrel, stor'd,
With legends, at our evening board,
Chants, as we bid, the mortal jars
Of hostile chiefs ; or sings the wars
That gain'd for Fergus Albyn's crown,
And great King Galdus his renown ;
With other themes, which we essay
To store in mind. Our name is Hay.
From Arn, of Loncarty's domain,
Who homage owns to Methven's thane,
We hold our farm at hire and fee,
From vassalage and bondage free :
And thus we ne'er have arms essay'd,
Or to array of war been bred.

Gilwarden with amazement eyed
His giant host, and eager cried :
How ! have you ne'er aspir'd to fight,
To guard your king and country's right ?
Feel you not for your country love ?
When thus the man, as if he strove

With self-reproach. With shame I own
We never arms of war have known ;
Yet love we well our country too ;
But what can lonely peasants do ?
Here, when the minstrel, in his tales,
The glorious deeds of war details ;
Of heroes sings, and battles dire,
We catch, sometimes, his warlike fire :
And then my sons, in fumes, regret
Their lot obscure, and narrow state,
Which has to their aspiring pride
The hope of like renown denied :
And then I laugh, amus'd to see
Such freaks in peasant men like we.

Thus Hay : his stalwart sons the while
Abash'd ; but each with sidelong smile,
Content to bear their father's jeer,
If pleas'd his tale the stranger's ear.
When Lord Gilwarden still, who eyed
The man with passing wonder, cried :
Good man ! your sons might grace a fate
Above the sphere they well regret.

But fled, I see, is now the day ;
And I must speed my homeward way.
Yet if again, I, by the chase,
Should ere be drawn your fields to trace,
Do you consent me welcome leave
Again to make a visit brief ;
Your hospitality to taste,
And thus again converse and rest ?

Most sure ! the man, with ardour, cried ;
Your visit oft will be our pride,
Till I your aid to day forget ;
A welcome, sure ! of lengthen'd date.
When Lord Gilwarden and his train,
Departing, took, with speed, amain
The daths that towards Methven lay ;
But long and darksome was the forest way.

Meanwhile, o'er Methven's halls, embower'd
In woods, the deep'ning evening lower'd ;
The troubled clouds the welkin scour'd ;
The transient meteor's flare

Shot through the gloom ; the day was gone ;
But on the castle towers alone

Still linger'd Inva fair.

Absorb'd in thought, her blank survey
Still dwelt upon the woodland way,
Whence, that sad morn, when parting view,
Her sire, belov'd, had wav'd adieu.

Thus walk'd the maid the turrets high,
In mind still deeming he was nigh :
But now, amidst that fant'sy fair,
Struck on her heart a nearer care :
She had not heard Gilwarden's horn,
As wont, from chase, sound his return :
She pass'd and ask'd the menial train
His cause of stay, but ask'd in vain.
With painful speed the moments flew,
Hours pass'd, and midnight onward drew ;
Fast grew her fears ; but still delay'd,
By cause unknown her brother staid.

But now a horn resounding near
Gave joy to every anxious ear :

The portals ring, the bridges fall ;
All thought it Lord Gilwarden's call.
But ruffians, arm'd, that moment pour'd
Into the gate, the pass secur'd ;
And all th' unconscious warder train
Who met their first assault were slain ;
While fled, in panic fear, the rest,
And to the inner halls for safety press'd.

Now, kindling lights, the robbers eyed,
With jeers, their slaughter vile ;
Some for the lady Inva cried,
And some prepared for spoil :
And Inva, who had nought of harm
Suspected, heard the dread alarm :
But soon to danger's cries and fears
Shut were her thoughts, and deaf her ears ;
For such a dread her soul invades
And veils her functions o'er,
That, swooning, midst her trembling maids
She sunk, and heard no more.

And now, tumultuously, the raid
The castle's inner halls invade ;

Each ruthless robber dealing fate
Promiscuously to all they met :
While, in confusion wild, assail
 On every side, the ear,
The cries of the marauders fell,
 And shrieks and yells of fear.
But round the daughter of their lord,
At that terrific moment, pour'd
Of Methven's guards a chosen few,
And all who dar'd approach her slew :
And there seem'd bent to death to brave
The foe, their lady lov'd to save.
When two in masks, the robber crew
Who seem'd to head, advanc'd to view,
As if the warders to dismay,
And to the lady forc'd their way ;
But forth a daring swordsman pour'd,
And almost had the nearest gor'd,
When, while the next the thrust oppos'd,
His mask was shorn, and Culen stood disclos'd.

The guards, who knew the king, dismay'd
And trembling, from his presence fled :

And Inva, in that fated hour,
Was left in his and Angus' power.
When Angus, burning all his hate
On Methven and his house to sate,
Rais'd on one arm the swooning maid,
While with his sword his steps he staid ;
And thus the ravishers, aghast
With crime, the castle portals pass'd.
And quickly the marauders vile,
O'erladen now with heaps of spoil,
Forth, too, to seek their mountains hied,
And left great Methven's halls a ravag'd void.

Now, of the household, those who fate
Escap'd, dismay'd and trembling, met ;
To counsel with united mind
What duty to them first enjoin'd.
But while they talk'd their griefs and fears,
Sounds from the woods assail'd their ears,
Of cries confus'd, and boisterous words,
The clang of shields, and clash of swords.
They deem Gilwarden has regain'd
His sister ! and their hearts distend

With joy ! and long the menial train
Thus listen'd ; but, alas ! in vain :
At length the noise seem'd to decay,
And soon in mournful silence died away.

But now the menials all took horse,
And, urg'd by terror, each his course
With lash and spur impetuous bends,
To rouse their absent chieftain's friends.
When all the nearest thanes, with speed
Inform'd of the atrocious deed,
Took arms, and each, with his array,
Prepar'd to Scone to speed his way,
The guilty Culen to depose,
And stay the kingdom's further woes ;
And in their counsels to assist,
The States to meet by letters press'd.

But from great Methven's castle, lone
And ravag'd, scarce th' alarm had gone,
And ere his friends had heard and mourn'd
His wrongs, the mightythane return'd.
Proceeding, he, from Atha's clan
Had learn'd the Kerns had all withdrawn

Back to their holms and isles in fear,
When his advance they came to hear ;
And home by weighty cares constrain'd
To speed, the thane that morn had gain'd
The castle woods. But his surprise
How great ! when in them met his eyes
His son, with his attendants round,
To trees with thongs securely bound,
Each bearing in his looks aghast,
Some horror drawn that words surpass'd.
For there the hunter-train waylaid
Had been, and fetter'd by the raid,
While, with their horns, their call they feign'd,
And access to the castle gain'd.

Great Methven was with wonder seiz'd ;
And ordered all to be releas'd.
But doubly his amazement grew,
When, thus releas'd, they from him flew ;
And, with distracted looks, his son
Most eagerly seem'd him to shun.
For that the castle had been forc'd
Gilwarden knew, and fear'd the worst :

And if his sister wrong had known,
Of which his heart gave dread presage,
He knew his life must it atone,
If then he met his father's rage.
And thus, to terror all betray'd,
To 'scape, he knew not whither, fled.

But quickly, at his undefin'd
Dismay, it flash'd on Methven's mind
That some unknown and awful fate
His house had in his absence met ;
When dreadfully he drew his sword,
And forward to the castle pour'd.
But, furious thus, when he advanc'd,
And round the rising turrets glanc'd,
And saw no warders on the wall
As wont, obedient to his call,
The portals widely open thrown,
And all in silence, drear and lone ;
He, reeling, leant upon his sword,
As if his faculties, o'erpower'd
Already with conjectur'd wo,
Refus'd the sequel dread to know.

But by his prompt attendants stay'd,
He rous'd again, and forward sped ;
Pass'd through the gates, with carnage stain'd,
And of a wounded warder gain'd,
That cunning robbers had beguil'd
Their sent'nels, and the castle spoil'd ;
That Lady Inva, from them torn,
Was forth the castle, swooning, borne
By Angus and the king, in vain
Disguis'd, amongst the robber train ;
For, till they came, we harm to her defied ;
The faithful warder wildly cried, and died.

By Angus, and the king ! exclaim'd
The chieftain ; heard I Culen nam'd ?
O ! monstrous ! was it to profane
My house ? my line and blood to stain,
That he a smooth repentance feign'd,
And me to leave my castle gain'd ?
Is't not enough he has despoil'd
Religion's sanctuaries ? defil'd
Those with him from the matrice grown ?
And even the issue of his own ;

That he upon my age must fall
And rob me of my child ! my earthly all !
And Angus, too ! my house to prowl
A midnight thief ! perchance, the foul
Promoter of the daring raid :
But where have they my child convey'd ?
I'll find her ! if this earthly mould
Her in its darkest caverns hold !
And let no aliment of men
Pass to my lips, O heaven ! again ;
Earth, yield me not again a bed !
Nor human dwelling lend me shade !
Till on those ravishers abhorr'd
I deeply glut my vengeful sword !
Which sworn, to horse he wildly flew ;
His warders fast his course pursue ;
And follow on through wood and flood
Unconscious of his purpose or his road.

Meanwhile, Gilwarden's ear had gain'd
The wrongs his sister had sustain'd ;
And that, his sire, with boundless feud,
Her baleful ravishers pursued.

But, fearing to advance to aid,
And viewing the destruction dread
Which he had wrought, the youthful chief
Was 'whelm'd in agonies of grief.
And bent, till the event was known,
His noble kindred all to shun ;
Distress'd, and to despair beguil'd,
He roam'd amongst recesses wild,
Unconscious where, with burning brains ;
And fared with neatherds and with swains.

END OF CANTO IV.

CANTO V.

SWEET shone the morn, and glitter'd bright
The woodlands, Bertha was in sight ;
A Saxon robe, of costliest thread
And die, was o'er the lady spread ;
Her palfrey's rein the friar bore,
A warder grim rode on before ;
They spurr'd their mettled steeds, and fast
They sped, but yet no words had pass'd.
At length a hollow ravine lay
Before, and by the broken way
Their speed was for a moment stay'd ;
When thus, with sobs, the lady said :

Priest, as thy vestures thee declare,
Profanes it not the vows you bear

To heaven, in deeds like this to aid ?
And you, stern warrior, wo may dread
If me to injury you bear,
Why do you force me thus, and where ?
But silent mov'd the warder on ;
And word the palmer answer'd none.
And now the ravine pass'd, his steed
Each spurr'd anew, and urg'd to speed ;
And still they eager forward hied,
And still for haste the friar cried ;
Till, stain'd their steeds with mire and heat,
The travellers stood at Bertha abbey gate.

A bell gave of their halting note ;
A voice within their business sought.
The palmer whisper'd ; carried straight
Were to the hall his words of weight ;
The convent's strong reluctant bars
With note of prompt admission jars ;
Two courteous sisters in the gate
The lady, now alighting, met,
And kindly to the abbess led ;
Who her embrac'd with holy warmth, and said.

Fair stem of mighty Methven's line,
For thee we bow to grace divine,
Which, in the hour with peril fraught
Has this deliverance for thee wrought.
But let thy breast be calm, thy fear
Subside, thou art in safety here ;
Where our best cares shall thee attend ;
With prayers that thus it all may end ;
And trouble soon from mind be borne
By your great father's safe return.

With this, and like condolence kind,
The abbess sooth'd fair Inva's mind ;
When she, who felt her fears subside,
At length, thus, tremblingly, replied :
Yes, holy matron, all secure
I rest in this asylum pure.
But you of perils speak, and great
Deliverance ; what has been the fate
Unconscious, the appalling plight
That I have pass'd this awful night ?
I know our castle by a raid
Was forc'd — I heard the robbers dread —

But knew no more ; for I to thought
Was lost, till, in a wood remote
By this conventual grave sustain'd,
My trembling senses I regain'd.
And from my hearing of the raid
Till then, what fill'd that chasm dread,
And wherefore I am hurried here ;
I seek to know ? yet ask with fear.

Thus Inva. When the reverend man,
Her faithful guide, thus grave began :
Charge of your safety, lady, press'd
Me on our way to utmost haste ;
Hence speech with you I then forbore,
But now, your dangers happily o'er,
My further moments here I give,
With joy your bosom to relieve.
Know, then, that the presumptuous raid
Last night at Methven, was not led
By robbers mean, but high-born men ;
And you the prize they strove to gain.

The actors in this deed of shame
Were Angus — more I dare not name !

But he, amid the tumult's roar,
You, swooning, from the castle bore,
And to his steed at hand convey'd,
Exulting in his success dread.
But as he mounted for the flight,
Forth on him rush'd a gallant knight,
Till then unseen, and struck, astound,
The baleful recreant to the ground ;
You, then, with tender arms he stay'd ;
When Angus (for his second fled)
Cried help ! and at his coward words
Your generous friend was hemm'd by swords ;
But, proof from his assailants' harms
(For he was cas'd in chosen arms),
He plac'd thee safe ; then drew his sword,
And fiercely mid the miscreants pour'd ;
But scarcely had they felt his might,
When all in terror took to flight.

You rescued, your deliverer kind
Next to your safety turn'd his mind :
When I, who happily was there
Attending him in ghostly care,

Advis'd that, till your sire's return,
You should for safety here be borne.
When, yielding thee his robe, to ward
From cold, his squire to be your guard,
And urging us to utmost haste, —
As if by other duties press'd,
Upon his steed himself he threw,
And gallop'd swiftly from our view.
And having, lady, thus your mind
Reliev'd, and safely you consign'd
To this secure and holy place,
I take my leave, and wish you heavenly peace.

He said : and, bowing, turn'd away,
When Inva, suppliant, thus. O, stay !
Stay ! saintly man, give me to know
To whom I this deliverance owe ;
Is he a chieftain of our clan ?
Or any near, or to us known ?
That I, while living, heaven may pray
This kindness done me to repay :
Who is he ? that with me may join
My sire, my brother, and my line,

In thanks to him, through life ; which, yet,
Will leave us in eternal debt :
Say, holy father ! I implore,
Who was he thus me from destruction tore ?

Brief, lady, is my leisure here,
For duties weighty on me bear,
The holy palmer mildly said :
But let your gentle heart be stay'd,
For he who aided in your need
Had ample payment in the deed.
To you he does no lineage bear,
Nor any clan or kindred near ;
But is a stranger, hither led
To study arms : by name, 'twas said,
When once he sojourn'd here before,
The knight, Sir Edric of the Spur.

He ! — he ! — exclaim'd the beauteous maid ;
He save me ! when her speech seem'd stay'd ;
And, veiling with her robe her eyes,
She seem'd entranc'd in deep surprise.
Meanwhile the priest, as rous'd anew
To haste, aside the abbess drew ;

And while their brief colloquy pass'd,
The abbess seem'd to stand aghast ;
Now clasp'd her hands, now seem'd to raise
Her eyes to heaven in prayer, or praise.
At length the priest with her dispos'd
A ring ; and, as the conference clos'd,
Again repeating his adieu,
He turn'd and hastily withdrew.
And Inva, who had yet repress'd
The rushing thoughts that heav'd her breast,
Now led apart by sisters kind,
With hope by rest to calm her mind,
While tears her beauteous eyes suffus'd,
A moment thus intensely mus'd.

 This rescue from remed'less wo
To heavenly mercy first I owe ;
But he who did the act benign
Must something be almost divine :
First, he in Methven field defin'd
A greatness rare amongst his kind ;
And after, when he in the grove
To me, unworthy, profferr'd love,

He magnified the lofty worth
And honour he at first set forth ;
And, though his suit rejection met,
Still he seems hovering o'er my fate
Like guardian angel, unsubdued
By all my sins, to do me good ;
Yet flies my gratitude to shun.
Who is, O heaven ! this strange unknown ?
But fix, ye nerves ; be firm, my mind :
For if he be of earthly kind,—
And if again his suit he move,
His will I be, whate'er his fortunes prove.
Then fond she seiz'd the Saxon robe,
 And to her lovely breast,
Which heav'd with many an ardent throb,
 The senseless vesture press'd ;
And thee ! cried she, this vow sincere
I plight, for him, till then, to wear —
My proudest robe. Then sunk, oppress'd
By toil, the beauteous maid to rest.

Thus Inva's dangers all seem'd pass'd.
But deep'ning glooms the state o'er cast.

Fir'd at her wrongs, and all alarm'd,
The nobles, far and near, had arm'd;
And many were already met
At Scone, and join'd in deep debate
How from King Culen they the sway
Might wrest, and public ruin stay.
But while they thus the laws explor'd
For rescue from his rule abhorr'd,
A captain of the royal train
Rush'd in, and cried,—The king is slain!

By whom? the whole assembly cried;
When the reporter, sad, replied:
Oh, that I could withhold the word
From utterance! by Rodardus' sword!
Return'd, the morn his wrongs were done,
To Methven, and his daughter gone,
The injur'd chief, with direful feud,
Her baleful ravishers pursued.
And having trac'd the king, who, lost
To sense of crime, regardless pass'd
Near to his lands, th' infuriate thane
Rush'd, lion-like, through all his train

And struck him dead ; then straight set forth
To search for Angus in the north,
Where rumour says that chief is flown ;
But whether with his victim, is unknown.

While thus was told the tragic tale,
An awful silence seem'd to seal
All lips ; and on its ending, long
Amazement fetter'd every tongue ;
Some seem'd in grief, some fill'd with fears,
And many scarce withheld their tears.
Yet not the deed did they bemoan,
But that it was by Methven done ;
Who, though he injury had sustain'd,
Had thus his line illustrious stain'd ;
And, by the crime, 'reav'd of his arms
And wisdom midst such wild alarms,
What might of Scotland be the fate
Lay on some minds with 'whelming weight.

Thus sat the States, with cares confus'd,
And o'er their country's sorrows mus'd ;
O'er ills which pass'd their power to cure,
Or for protracted time endure.

But, entering now the council high,
One, cas'd in mail, drew every eye ;
A reverend priest his footsteps trac'd,
Whose mien announc'd some high behest ;
And last, with growing wonder view'd,
A second warrior forward stood.
When he who had the first advanc'd,
Round all the wondering council glanc'd ;
And, having up his beaver thrown,
Demanded if he there were known.

The nobles, gazing with surprise,
Now on his visage fix'd their eyes,
And, Cruthenitus ! many cried.
When thus the stranger prompt replied :
Even he ! and equal knowledge have
Of my colleague, Fothadus grave.
Years hence, it was assign'd our care
The travels of our prince to share
In foreign lands ; and now, the end
Of his adventurous labours gain'd,
His toils and anxious wanderings o'er,
We him, with joy, to you restore ;

For, be to all the kingdom known,
In yon mail'd warrior, Kenneth, Malcolm's son.
Which said, his helmet Kenneth rais'd,
Whilst rapt the nobles on him gaz'd ;
And, though he seem'd in mind distress'd,
King Malcolm's lines were all in him express'd.

Now, strange the scene : the lords, with cries
Of transport, rose, and spoke their joys
In shouts which seem'd the halls to rend,
And lengthen as if ne'er to end.
But when their sudden rapture's tide
At length seem'd verging to subside,
The Græme for audience eager press'd,
And thus the patriot prince address'd.

Great Malcolm's son, prince Kenneth, hear !
For you we long have pin'd in fear ;
And wonder not that your return
Is not with silent pleasure borne.
But now our suffering country spares
No more our thoughts for lighter cares :
Vacant, alas ! is Scotland's throne,
Her glories fallen, her greatness flown ;

The renovation of the state
Demands an arm with skill replete.
Our hope for that in thee is stor'd ;
I thine pronounce the kingdom's sword.
Behold ! O chieftains, Scotland's king !
When rung the hall, from wing to wing,
With,— Hail ! the king ! we swear, we swear,
Kenneth, our king, to honour and revere !

But joy's excess at length restrain'd,
Now still and breathless silence reign'd.
When Kenneth thus. Chiefs of the land,
Your high regards for me demand
That I accept the public care
As freely as you it confer.
But, be it to the kingdom known
That I with sadness mount a throne,
Which late my brother's blood has stain'd,
And on whose steps yet bleeds my friend.
My most lamented brother's fate,
'Tis true, a vengeance just has met ;
But who in power at ease can feel
When worth like his 'scapes not the traitor's
steel ?

Thee, Culen, too ! my fallen friend,
Our childhood was together train'd :
Then was thy soft and generous breast
Of every noble thought possess'd ;
Thy friendship zealous and secure,
Thy nature just, thy passions pure.
But, soil'd, at length, like water thrown
In mire, by foulness not thy own,
To vice deluded, and abus'd
By fiends might angels have seduc'd —
Thou, too, art slain ! Oh, wo to say,
By once the throne and law's chief stay !
O Methven ! in thy crime we view
The angel tribes' revolt anew ;
Celestials from allegiance jar,
And wage on heaven a second war.
But thine, and all the host of crimes
That have debas'd the land and times,
I'll visit with a vengeance due,
Fearless of treason's serpent crew.
The sceptre of the state I wear,
And it I'll wield with arm severe.
For council, lords, let us prepare
On weighty matters to confer ;

The bleeding land for pity cries,
And we in action must be swift and wise.

Now to the throne the king was led,
All regal homages were paid ;
And soon before him, cloth'd in state,
Th' assembled lords in council met.
When he, to crime and guilt's dismay,
Thus spoke the purpose of his sway :
Know, faithful nobles, that the men
Have not of late escap'd our ken
From whom the evils first have grown
That public order have o'erthrown ;
And now, with a determin'd hand,
We pass to lop them from the land.
To Stirling first, where duty may
Command us for a time to stay ;
And thence, as calls the public need,
With justice' sword we will proceed ;
Till from our country we erase
Its stains, and give our people peace.
For, while I hold this kingdom's power,
Each peasant's cot shall be his tower ;

The poor shall reap their toil's reward,
And virtue be its own sufficient guard.

Thus spoke King Kenneth, when his voice
Was lost amongst th' assembly's joys.
Then thus resum'd: But of the head
Of crimes be first examples made.
Angus, who first with error stain'd
Culen, my once regarded friend,
Whose thirst for violence naught could sate
Till he seduc'd him to his fate ;
And through whose other crimes abhorr'd
The people's blood in streams have pour'd ;
We sentence, as the laws demand,
To forfeiture of life and land.
Let him be sought, to meet his fate ;
And let no man his flight abet,
Or shield him, keep or hold beneath,
On pain of forfeiture and death.

On Methven, next the laws demand
Their rights ; but justice' sacred hand
Sinks almost paralys'd and lame,
With him infliction's stroke to name :

Yet might she blush the sword to wear,
Were he to 'scape her arm severe.
And he, as his offence demands,
We, too, denounce in life and lands.

Thus spoke the king, with voice austere,
Yet scarce the while withheld a tear ;
And through the council every chief
Or wept, or seem'd absorb'd in grief.
But after long and solemn pause,
Great Lothian, speaking thus, arose :
O prince ! deliverer of the state —
That Methven's crime is passing great,
All must confess ; but, also, strong
And 'whelming was his heavy wrong.
His daughter from his castle torn,
And from high rank to baseness borne,
While duties high him from her drew —
Alas ! and such a daughter, too —
Were wrongs so potent and extreme
That few could brook with natures tame.
And could the royal grace abate
To banishment his painful fate,

The gracious boon would, doubtless, find
High gratitude in every loyal mind.

Rodardus' wrongs, the king replied,
Cannot, great Lothian, be denied.
Where did the chief his daughter find,
To shame and misery thus consign'd ?
Nothing, my liege, is known as yet,
Said Lothian, of the lady's fate ;
So rapid pass'd the scenes of pain,
That Methven, till the king was slain,
Was deem'd by all to be remote ;
And now he is, with vengeance fraught,
Pursuing Angus, who has flown :
His daughter's plight to him unknown.

How ! Lothian ! Kenneth, frowning, said,
We would that thou thy suit had stay'd ;
To pray for Methven sentence light,
Thou giv'st it plea for triple weight.
How ! ere he had the knowledge gain'd
His daughter injury had sustain'd,
Rush'd Methven on, with fury rude,
And stain'd his hands with royal blood ?

Nay, had he prov'd the ills he fear'd,
The laws he ought to have rever'd ;
And with the States, who wisely sat,
Have left the wrongs his house had met.
Are kings, remed'lessly, to stand
The butt of any traitor's hand,
While humble men may be reveng'd ?
No ! Methven's doom shall stand unchang'd ;
And, but for service he has done the state,
Dire were the death that should on him await.

Thus spoke the king. And Lothian for
The fallen thane could plead no more.
And now the court, with utmost speed,
Prepar'd for Stirling to proceed ;
And Kenneth, thither on his way,
Soon pass'd, with all his court, the Tay.
While the surrounding people's joys
To heaven in acclamations rise ;
And where he pass'd the good were stay'd,
And guilt to caves and forests fled.

CANTO VI.

AT Stirling now King Kenneth lay,
Enacting vigorous laws, to stay
The rapines that so long had reign'd,
And Scotland's peace and glory stain'd.
But now, while he, with efforts great,
Thus labour'd to restore the state,
Fraught with revenge and deadly hate,
 Pour'd from the north the foe.
To 'venge their sires in Albion slain,
And fierce for plunder came the Dane,
Complete in arms, a mighty host;
And, anchoring on the Ænian coast,
 Announc'd new scenes of wo.

Where the red promontory's steep
Points sailors through the northern deep,

In Lunon's solitary bay
Close in their ships a time they lay ;
Debating where to land and lead
The war with fairest hope of speed.
Helric, a chief inform'd by years
In warfare's cunning, urg'd his peers
T' abandon Albyn's hated coast,
Where fate so oft their arms had cross'd,
And steer with their unbroken bands,
For England's rich and fertile lands,
As were their purposes before
Their navy left the Cimbrian shore.
The Scots, said he, inur'd to toil,
Fierce, from their clime and barren soil,
Our ancestors did ne'er oppose
In arms without some mighty loss ;
And, should we conquer them, our gain
Would scarce repay the effort's pain ;
While we, in a reverse, would know
All rigours from a cruel foe.

But, dark in arms, fierce Humber rose ;
And, frowning from his knotted brows,

Cried, Warriors ! if we arm to steer
Our navies through the seas in fear,
To seek safe combats, and oppose
In easy wars complying foes ;
If so, with all your speed unmoor,
And haste away from Albyn's shore.
But, say, by Helric's counsel led,
We sail, and England first invade,—
Knows not sage Helric that, e'en then
We fly the dreaded Scots in vain ;
For, by the league King Alfred made
With Gregory,* for their mutual aid
Against our arms, if there we steer,
The Scots will march upon our rear :
And Helric's counsel, when too late,
Be found our ruin and defeat.
I, reasoning thus, pronounce it far
Our wisest course, while strong for war,

* Alfred of England, and Gregory of Scotland, both highly warlike and patriotic princes, had made such a league, for mutual aid against the inroads of the Danes, as is here referred to.

To seize the present favouring hour
Of Albyn's broils, to crush her power ;
Or waste her strength by some dread blow,
That she may rise no more our foe.

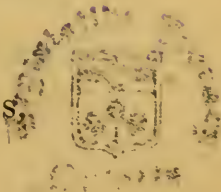
The fiercer chiefs, by Humber rous'd
To pride of arms, his plans espous'd ;
And discord threaten'd to divide
The assembly : hot from side to side
Taunts pass'd, and fierce retorts were made,
And tumult through the council spread.

But now, from rocky caverns near,
A boat was seen towards them steer ;
When stay'd was straight the fierce debate ;
And, in the ship where they were met
In council, with amazement view'd,
Amongst them baleful Angus stood.
For, when his doom to him was known,
He to his furthest lands had flown,
And sought in caves and woods retreat,
Till thus appear'd the Cimbrian fleet ;
When, by their arms, he hop'd to change
His fate, or on his country take revenge.

Thus, urg'd by desperate hope, his last
Resource, the traitor to them pass'd ;
And to his utmost cunning press'd,
Thus Cimbria's wondering chiefs address'd.

Princes and chiefs ! I hail your power,
To Albyn come in welcome hour,
To stay the country's civil woes,
And triumph o'er your direst foes.
I know how weak the Scottish trains,
I know the country's richest plains ;
And if you list I'll guide your way,
To make their wealth your easy prey.
For this I come ; as, near at hand,
I saw you hesitate to land.
A town is in the northward bay
Whose spoil your valour will repay ;
And to direct you there to land,
I wait, brave chiefs, but your command.

As pass'd the word from Angus' tongue,
With loud assent the council rung :
And, yielding all to his commands,
They steer'd their ships, and ready bands



Towards the copious bay
Where Esk's bright floods to ocean flows,
And, in the sea's embrace, Montrose,
A town of traffic, lay.
And there, by Angus, now array'd
In Cimbrian arms, the Danes were led
And landed; while the townsmen made
Courageous to the fight.
But, on the numbers of the Dane,
Their frantic valour prov'd in vain;
And who were not in battle slain,
In vain attempted flight.
For, hurried by the foe abhorr'd
Into the sea, or by the sword,
All perish'd: when, with direful yell,
Upon the town the victors fell.
Dread hour! the streets were instant heap'd
With slain; nor age not sex escap'd;
Nor prayers could soften, nor submission stay
Their deadly rage, till none were found to slay.

Nor could the sword of death assuage
Their ruthless fury: urg'd by rage

Insatiate, they renew'd their toil,
And hurried to their ships the spoil.
When torches of Norwegian pine,
Surcharg'd with flaming turpentine,
They fir'd by hundreds, and, to crown
Their fury, launch'd into the town ;
Which soon arose in spires of light,
That through the plain and bay,
Seem'd to transform the frighted night
Into a hideous day.

Where, then secure, around their fires,
The Danish hordes, in boisterous quires,
Roar'd their rude songs, or tore their meal ;
Or quaff'd to Odin bowls of ale ;
Or, stretch'd supine upon the plain,
By toil at length oppress'd,
Resack'd the town, and slew again,
In horrid dreams, the shrieking slain,
And with'd in troubled rest.

Now radiant from the ocean rose
The morn, and wrapp'd the Grampians' brows
In streams of hoary light.

Alas ! but, at their country's woes
On fire, and ready to oppose,
As wont, to glorious death, her foes
 No Scots advanc'd in sight.
The neighbouring populace, dismay'd,
Without a chief of worth to lead
Or organise their band, had fled
 In cover of the night.

The Danes, at early dawn in arms,
Exulting saw the land's alarms ;
And, led by Angus, to the west,
Then Scotland's richest districts, press'd :
Where, quickly, its mysterious tower
Mark'd Brechin to their furious power.
But, happ'ly seated on a hill,
And strongly wall'd by Pictish skill,
That town, save what their fires destroy'd,
Launch'd o'er its walls, their rage defied.

From thence, with rage redoubled, bore
The foe towards sublime Strathmore ;
The valley vast which, Scotland through,
To feed its mountains, Nature drew.

Fields where, ere then, the Scots had bled
Too oft in freedom's conflict dread :
As witness still the dark remains
At Cupar, and in Guthry's plains ;
The martial line, the fosse profound,
And vallum proud, that marks the ground
Where, toiling to extend their sway,
Long erst invasion's legions lay ;
When, bloated and diseas'd at home,
And tottering to its fall, proud Rome
March'd, to subdue the patriot Gael,
Her legions, the sixth time, to fail.
For, though great Gildus glorious died,
Scots liv'd who still her conquering arms defied.

Through those fam'd fields, with rage unstay'd,
From hill to hill the Cimbrians spread,
And ravag'd all in sight ;
While to the Grampians, Findhaven high,
And Guthry, all had power to fly,
Of the affrighted populace nigh,
At their approach took flight.

Wide spread the cry ; and forward press'd
The rapid foe, in wreck and waste
Involving all the plains between
The silver Isla and the Dean,
To Migne, fam'd in ancient tale,
And first of towns that cheer'd the vale ;
Whose fanes, by Pictish cunning wrought,
Set by their heathen rage at naught,
By mattock min'd, or firebrand crown'd,
Soon heap'd in shapeless wreck the ground.

From Migne, through the trembling plains
Resistless pour'd the furious Danes,
And southward pierc'd their way.
Their left on Newtyl hills, their rude
Disorder'd right on Isla's flood ;
Whilst naught their callous rage withstood,
Or could their fury stay.
And thus, while slaughter, rapine blind,
And universal rout, defin'd
Their front, and desolation drear,
Or sack'd and burning towns, their rear ;
They held, unhalting, their career
Through Ænia to the Tay.

But, happily, now, that splendid flood,
The prince of Albion's waters, stood
Of Scotland's freedom fortress good,
And kept their rage at bay.

At tidings first to Stirling brought
Of those events, King Kenneth, fraught
With rage, perplexity, and grief,
Strove to refuse the tale belief.
But, following quickly wild report,
When fugitives arriv'd at court
All pale and bleeding from the foe,
And vouch'd by wounds the tale of wo ;
The patriot monarch rose, and pac'd
The council hall in troubled haste,
And smote at intervals his breast :

Then to his nobles near
Cried he,— The rage of foreign power
Comes on us in untimely hour, —
When ills intestine to efface
We more had need of outward peace.
But the rapacious, cruel Dane,
Ere this, has found the Scots are men ;
And they, we trust, for this profane

Intrusion shall pay dear.
Supply me, thanes, with men of might
Terrific in the dreadful fight,
Of valour that, in trial's hour,
Was never barr'd by human power!
Let me have such, to see upon
This daring foe meet vengeance done !

Meet vengeance shall the king abide,
On all his foes ! great Lothian cried ;
Albyn can yet supply the field
With men that ne'er to man will yield,
Although, for prompt and speedy aid,
Their numbers may be widely spread.
But let the royal heralds haste
To warn the north, the south, and west,
And charge the powerful thanes who lie
Remote, to march upon the Tay ;
While we the warlike summons sound
With speed through all the districts round,
And marshal every man to arms,
To stay the spread of wild alarms ;
For, till our mightier powers appear,
We have in loyal number near

A strength which, if we well apply,
The foe's advance we shall defy.

Well hast thou said, renown'd Dunbar !
Quoth Kenneth, griev'd ; the force is far
Remote, in whom remains the weight
At present of our kingdom's might.
The canker-worm of sloth and crimes
Has cut the sinew of the times ;
But God against the heathen foe
Will arm, we trust, our feeble blow.
Haste all to arms ! the force at hand
We will, with you to aid, command.
To-morrow's dawn, the Forth we cross ;
And, as we muster, by Kinross,
Will march upon the Earn and Tay,
T' observe the foe, and, haply, stay
Their ravages, till we have might
To meet them, like our sires, in fight.

The king retir'd, the chiefs withdrew ;
And loud the battle-summons roar'd
The plains and straths of Stirling through ;
And round their chiefs the warriors pour'd.

The marksmen, at the missile fam'd,
Their weapons barb'd, or strung ;
The anvils clash'd, the forges flam'd,
And arms and armour rung.
The war's reserves were piled around,
And all was preparation's rousing sound.

And thus while was supplied the fight,
Impatient of delay,
The young at feats of skill and might,
In mimic combats play ;
Or wave their bonnets, in adieu,
And bid their mountain nymphs be true.
In groups the veterans talk the cause
That claims their arms, their homes, and laws ;
And, as the plea commands applause,
And to their minds return
The victories of their early youth,
They to their king replight their truth,
And for the battle burn.

But arm'd, and now in massive bands
Embodied, at their chief's commands

The strength of the adjacent lands
Forth from their valleys wind :
And while the king advanc'd his force
With gallant haste a northward course ;
Now on the mountain's skirts descried,
Now from the forest seen to glide,
The warriors thick on every side
His patriot banners join'd.

Dark, from Dumblane, in troops descend
The sons of Allan's woody stream,
In holy zeal by culdees train'd,
To combat for the Christian name.
From where the foaming Dovan boils
In hoary caldrons, and, with roar
Eternal, spurns its rocky toils,
In ready bands the warriors pour :
From verdant Alva, rich in store
Of flocks ; from where in Ochil's mines
The silver lurks in mass, or ore,
The agate and the topaz shines ;
Of those then fully peopl'd lands
Descend in haste the gallant bands,

Infuriate at their country's harms,
And, shouting, join their king in arms.

From hilly Cleish, and Ballingrae,
Where haughty Rome, in earlier day,
Against the dreaded north
Her bulwarks rear'd, with toil and pain,
Which, proud in ruins, yet remain
To prove her fond ambition vain,
And patriot virtue's worth :
And where, from earth her bones and urns,
Even yet the rustic's mattock turns,
And rudely shews their power how low,
Who 'lum'd the world, though freedom's foe.
From those fam'd fields, each strath and glen,
Their country to defend again
Against invasion's baleful train,
Pour'd Scotland's warriors forth.

From Lomond's straths, and fam'd Kinross,
Which Leaven's effulgent floods inclose,
Where seem to float the fairy bowers
Of old St. Serf, and Congal's towers :

Where'er the flying heralds spread
The king's approach, with speed array'd
Rush'd forth the warriors in their might,
And join'd their brothers for the fight.

And with his thus augmenting force,
The king advanc'd a northward course
Two days; and, as the dawning cheer'd
The third, upon the Tay appear'd,
Where, insulating Elcho's towers,
The fountains of Benvoerlich pours

Through groves and meads their way :
But, not descrying there the Dane,
He scouts advanc'd, to ascertain
Their camp; and to advance delay'd,
In hope to muster further aid.
And where the Earn forsakes its glen,
With mighty Tay to seek the main,
To view his hasty gather'd train
Encamp'd the monarch lay.

He found, with pride, his numbers strong;
And to his ranks still many throng

Who sought with patriot zeal the fight,
Though green in arms, untried in might.
But as the king, in strict review,
Thus pass'd his thronging legions through,
By Lothian, Græme, Macduff, and Mar,
Attended, to inspect the war ;
He notic'd, midst a common band,
One, arm'd beyond his fellows, stand
Aside, as if to shun his eyes,
And seem'd to view him with surprise.
When thus the Græme : Rodardus' son,
Perchance, is to the king unknown ;
'Tis well, that, 'midst his house's fall,
He has not shunn'd his country's call,
But duteous comes his sword to lend,
Her threaten'd freedom to defend.

Let him be charg'd, King Kenneth cried,
To join the battle near our side —
Not mix amongst inferior men !
We seek not thus his rank to stain.
Ah, Græme ! his sire, to Scotland lost,
With us to day, had been a host !

But thus it is that crimes of late
Have wrench'd the sinews of the state,
And left so few of nerve to stay
The land, in this its peril's day.
Which said, as if on study bent,
The king retir'd in silence to his tent.

But now, the scouts, who passed the Earn
With orders to advance and learn
The posture of the foe, their force,
And something of their purpos'd course ;
Return'd to camp in haste amain,
With certain tidings that the Dane
Had cross'd, with all their force, the Tay ;
And then in siege of Bertha lay.
For Angus still, who urg'd them on,
And now had much their favour won,
Had ascertain'd, that Inva there
Was borne, and in the convent's care
Dispos'd, by the unknown who stay'd
His flight with her at Methven's raid ;
And to the hapless maid his fate
Ascribing, and inflam'd by hate

Which nothing could atone or change —
With hope on her to find revenge,
By lauding Bertha's wealth, he had the Danes
Now drawn to its assault with all their trains.

Scarce had the scouts their tidings spoke,
When Kenneth, like a man awoke
From frightful and appalling dreams,
Rising amidst his chiefs, exclaims :
Besieging Bertha ! then, the foe
Aims at our kingdom's heart their blow !
But I, cried he, will lose my crown,
And life, or rescue Bertha town !
Brave chiefs, and warriors, all, take heed ;
To-night our force we thither lead ;
You know our plan of march, — his power
Each chieftain knows : we move at evening's
hour.

The chiefs, obedient to pursue
Their various duties, straight withdrew ;
And, by command, till evening's close
The troops reclin'd to take repose.

Except the labouring trains, who hew'd
Strong timbers from the neighbouring wood,
Which, duly trimm'd, they cord with care,
And on the Earn in rafts prepare,
Obedient to the royal will :
Then was the camp as midnight still.

Alone was heard the evening gale
Through the resisting forest wail,
Or stream, which rocks or shoals impede,
Murmuring for a smoother bed,
Till red the orb of day had set,
And twilight sunk in clouds of jet.
When from their common couch, the ground,
Rous'd by the shield's well-known alarms,
Up sprung the Scots, from sleep profound,
As they had lain, complete in arms.
And to the river-margin led,
While workmen, to the duty bred,
Swam from the rafts, and cables bore
To piles on the opposing shore
To warp them through the tide ;
The troops embark'd in columns vast,
Their inner mooring overcast,

And gain'd the further side,
Whence, covered by impervious night,
Close form'd, they mov'd in silent might,
Led by the king, a mighty host ;
And reach'd a strong important post
At Loncarty, as had been plann'd,
Ere knew the foe, or day had dawn'd.

But from the orient fount of light
Soon stream'd the morn, and rose to sight
Again the glowing sphere of men,
Deck'd with hill, forest, flood, and plain.
And now, when, from the Scots, the blaze
Of glittering arms, in morning's rays,
Reflected back the dawn ;
The Danes descried, with wild amaze,
The mighty host, and saw them raise
The lion in their van.

The royal standard well they knew,
And to their arms confus'dly flew,
And off from Bertha wildly drew ;
For well to them was known

The deadly valour of the Gael :
So many in their land could tell,
How oft the Scots, in combat fell,
 Their race had overthrown.

But Huba, Cimbria's prince, who led
Their bands, observ'd their panic dread ;
And straight his mind to measures bore
Their shaken courage to restore.
For skill'd in warfare's arts, as brave,
Command to march he instant gave,
And by a movement fraught with skill,
Took post on an adjacent hill,
Of access hard on every side,
And deem'd he there, at will, attack defied.

The Scottish bands, when first their foes
Were seen in dawning light,
 Fir'd by their country's wrongs and woes,
Burn'd to begin the fight ;
 And Kenneth, loth their pride to damp,
Or noble rage restrain,
 With haste abandoning the camp,
Advanc'd into the plain.

The king, in splendid armour clad,
With great Macduff the centre led ;
Brave Græme, and Lothian's thane, Dunbar,
Commanded on the wings ; and Marr,
And Murdo strong, on either hand
Led each their dark determin'd band.
While every massive clan between
Full many a knightly plume was seen,
And shield of rare device, that far
Shot glory through the darker war.
As gilds the sun the clouds in golden foils
On winter eve, and storms arise in smiles.

Thus stood upon the bent to fight
Two nations, in their time, for might
And fury in the battle's rage
Unmatch'd, perchance, in any land or age.
And ere their conflict to portray
May the adventurous Muse essay,
While yet before her vision lowers
Time's shadows, on the wing she cowers
A moment, to collect her powers,
And rouse her boldest strain ;

For who of this degenerate day,
And nerveless race, shall, reckless, lay
The hand on Albyn's martial lyre,
Secure, its thunders, and its fire,
Long sunk, to wake again ?

END OF CANTO VI.

CANTO VII.

THUS marshall'd on the open plains
The Scots to battle dar'd the Danes ;
Who held, and seem'd resolv'd, at will,
To hold their post upon the hill.
But when their bent King Kenneth knew,
His chosen archers forth he drew,
And javelineers, upon their van ;
When furiously the fight began.
For, dreadful, from their doubled bows
A thousand arrows instant rose
Above the close embattl'd foes,
 Each to his victim true.
And full as soon and surely aim'd,
Each with a triple death inflam'd,
From arms for force resistless fam'd
 A thousand javelins flew.

Which plunging on their host compress'd,
Nor helm nor cuirass could resist,
Nor art avoid, nor shield repel ;
For where they sunk the strongest fell.

And thus incessant from beneath,
Rose on the Danes the storm of death ;
Which they, from earlier waste of arms,
Could but return with trivial harms.
But thus by straight unlook'd-for press'd,
And to inventive rage address'd,

When their own shafts were done,
The Scottish darts, torn from their slain,
They hurl'd on them with death again ;
And gall'd their front, and tore the plain

With rolling piles of stone.
But finding, by their numbers slain,
That hope from such a strife was vain ;
And heated to their utmost rage
In direst battle to engage,
They reel'd, like waves in Cleutha pent,
And with a shout that ether rent,
Ringing in armour, from the height
They rush'd, a torrent, to the fight.

So to the battle came the foe ;
And with their force resistless, bore
The Scottish lines, advanc'd below,
An acre from their ground, or more ;
But for the shock that backward spurn'd
Their front, the Scots more fierce return'd.
As when the loosen'd rivage heaves
Its mass into the mining waves,
The sea recoils, or dash'd in air,
A moment leaves its margin bare ;
But quickly, with redoubled roar,
Returns, and re-asserts its shore.

So join'd the fight : and left, and right,
As clos'd the adverse bands amain,
The jar of their encountering might
Shook heaven, and tore the trembling plain.
Wide spread the cry ; and loud the shock
Of meeting shields, the mace's stroke,
The bill and broadsword's dreadful clang,
And sounds of axe and javelins rang
The deafening conflict round ;
While loud and shrill the war-pipes dread

With rancorous screams the slaughter led ;
And, from a thousand gashes shed,
 Red stream'd with blood the ground.

King Kenneth, like a comet bright,
Hung dreadful o'er the thickest fight ;
And oft by deeds of matchless might
 His warriors' ardour rais'd ;
Or distant squadrons to sustain,
When worsted, or reduc'd by slain,
To right, or leftward, through the plain
 Like a bright meteor blaz'd.
And, whilst his presence cheer'd the brave,
Or rous'd by shame the torpid slave,
Wide rang'd his mind ; and through the fight
Each chance that to his warriors' might
Could furnish stimulant or weight,
 With piercing foresight seiz'd.

The Danish prince, great Huba, led
Like gloriously his legions dread ;
And, mid the field, in iron clad,
 O'er all in giant height,

Appear'd, his warriors prompt to aid
And round him heaps of slaughter spread,
And o'er the dying and the dead
Urg'd on the burning fight.

And thus, each power by princes dread
Commanded, and with ardour led,
The battle clos'd ; till host in host,
And nation seem'd in nation lost ;
Like meeting waves diversely toss'd

When whirlwinds rend the main :
And so, or in wide columns spread,
Alternate, as wild valour led ;
Untaught to linger for command,
Pours on, self-moved, each furious band :
Or the dire charge in turns withstand,

And thus the fight maintain ;
While every onset's shock, with fate
Surcharg'd, their day of glory set,
And quench'd their patriot love, or hate,
The brave sink lifeless round ;
Unlaid their limbs, unclos'd their eyes ;
Or trod to death the wounded dies ;

Their anguish and expiring cries
In the dread tumult drown'd.

Thus fought the warriors : but between
Their columns prouder war was seen ;
Where, stimulating each his host,
The adverse chiefs each other cross'd ;
There, shining arms, the grace of mien
And art, the combatants between,
Took horror from the deadly fray,
And battle seem'd but gallant play.

The men of Earn, by Nathol dread,
And valiant Egan, jointly led,
Oppos'd terrific Hasting's bands,
And Uffa's, fam'd through many lands.
And spear inlocked with spear, and sword
With sword, by mutual havoc gor'd,
While fought their hosts, the captains proud
No quarter ask'd, and none allow'd ;
But fought, each feat of prowess vast
By each achievement new surpass'd,
Till either, vanquish'd, sunk beneath
The sword, or both in mutual death.

With fury, slaughter, rage, and might
Unslackening, roar'd the whirlwind fight.
Fincormac, with his bands, oppos'd
The force of Halden ; Corbert clos'd
With raging Anner. In the bay
Of Rumar Anner's turrets lay ;
Of hunter on the Norway'n shore
The festive haunt : but, tusky boar,
Or wolf, or wind-outspeeding deer,
No more will fall by Anner's spear.
His breast by Corbert's sword unlac'd,
His line and race no longer trac'd,
Like a vast tower o'erwhelm'd he lies,
And 'mid his bleeding vassals dies.

Still, through the fight King Kenneth press'd,
Shar'd every danger, and address'd
His care to all the varied strife,
Reckless of peril and of life.
But while he thus, by ardour led,
Oft his attending train outsped,
He mark'd that, whether he was drawn
To wing or centre, rear or van,



A warrior of surpassing might
Fought near his side, or in his sight ;
And by his valour, and emprise,
Oft drew resistlessly his eyes.

The stranger led no warlike band,
Nor minister'd, nor own'd command :
His mighty shield and plated mail,
From crown to foot, were sable steel ;
His helmet clos'd, as to defy
To scan his face the keenest eye.
But thus, performing deeds of might,
Still near the monarch through the fight
He mov'd : till, to amazement wrought,
The king a parley with him sought.
But greater wonder fill'd his mind,
When the unknown his call declin'd,
And, silent, to the rear withdrew,
As if he sought to pass from view.

Meanwhile, a Cimbrian chief, the field
Who rang'd, as if with aim conceal'd ;
And as the battle swerv'd and veer'd,
Oft near King Kenneth had appear'd ;

Now, while the king a column clos'd
And rode unconsciously expos'd,
Rush'd on him with resistless force,
And threw the monarch from his horse,
And, in his falling, at him made
A mortal blow ; but there was stay'd
His lifted arm ; the knight unknown
His battle-axe had at him thrown,
Which through the helmet to the brain
Clove mortally the seeming Dane,
Who foundering sunk the shock beneath,
While burst his helmet's bands away,
And writhing in the gasp of death,
Disclos'd the traitor Angus lay.

The king, by his attendants rais'd,
To see the recreant stood amaz'd ;
And he, by whom his fate was given,
Appear'd in wonder rapt to heaven.
When Angus, wrung by deadly pain,
Cried,—King ! thou 'scap'st my arm in vain :
For know, to my revenge you owe
The presence of this mighty foe ;

A foe, whose valour here, I trust,
Will tread thee and thy power in dust —
And 'venge my wrongs! Thus, seeming joy'd,
The baleful chief exclaim'd, and died.

Now, all by gratitude imbued,
The king his strange deliverer view'd:
And while he yet stood rapt in thought,
Him by the arm with fervour caught,
And cried, Brave knight, for cause unknown,
Though you have sought the king to shun,
Now, as your fellow man! I claim
In gratitude's behalf, your name!
Declare yourself! that I may know
To whom, from hence, my life I owe!
When deep the sable warrior sigh'd,
And thus, with hollow voice, replied.

Sovereign of Albyn, thus, of one
Once priz'd, take what remark you can;
For, save as harness'd thus I show,
Of me, alive, none more must know;
Here from the ken of men I fly,
And seek but honourably to die.

Yet, if my death divulge my name,
This boon I ask — protect my fame !
Which said, he, with a force so strong
That Kenneth's power could not withstand,
The arm he held straight from him wrung ;
But left his gauntlet in his hand.
Then rushing midst the thickest fight,
Pass'd from the wondering monarch's sight.

The king, to an attendant near
The gauntlet gave, with charge of care ;
And o'er in mind a moment turn'd
The strange event : but round him burn'd
The raging fight ; and quickly drew
His mind from past events to new.
For now the battle's awful tide
Roll'd in its strength from side to side ;
Now clashing arms and dying cries
Shook earth, and dust obscur'd the skies,
And deeds of fame so thickly throng
That their record would toil the song.
Græme, Lothian, Cruthenetus, Fife,
And Marr, commixing in the strife,

Perform'd exploits whose mention here,
Would bring the theme distrust in modern ear.

Still to the strife the armies stood
Mid heaps of slain, and streams of blood ;
Still by the patriot monarch led,
The Scots, though hastily array'd,
And many new to battle's hour,
Withstood all Cimbria's chosen power.

But now in heaven th' eternal sun
Had his diurnal zenith won ;
When Kenneth, who, for look'd-for aid
The distance search'd in vain, survey'd
The field ; and saw his troops, their best
Put forth, by Danish veterans press'd ;
And victory, or terrific rout,
For whom reserv'd, in dreadful doubt.
With which reviews, his bosom rent,
And all his soul upon the bent,
He bade his chiefs attend : and fast
The high command the heralds pass'd.
When, as his generals round him press'd,
Them briefly, thus the king address'd :

Chiefs ! leaders of your country's might !
You see the posture of the fight !
Past hope, our warriors have withstood
The foe, and still their wills are good ;
But, toil prolong'd the powers reduce,
And oft the noblest will subdues.
Say ! judge ye then our venture less,
In rousing now the troops to press
By one united charge the foe,
And thus attempt their overthrow ;
Or, by a firm compact retreat,
A worse alternative defeat ;
Till aids, which doubtless now are near,
If duty has not flinch'd, appear,
For us a victory to enforce :
Say, warriors ! which our wisest course ?

The first the wisest, noblest choice,
All answered with united voice ;
To rouse the army's utmost might,
And bring to one great charge the fight.
Let, added Lothian, every thane
Encourage and excite his train

By words most apt ; form every band
Anew ; and then, at one command,
Our force combin'd on Cimbria pour,
And her discomfiture is sure.

Thus Lothian : every chief in mind
According ; when the king rejoin'd,—
Brave chieftains ! my assent is given ;
Your bold resolves so prosper heaven !
When each has pass'd to his command,
And rallied and confirm'd his band,
This sign shall lead the general charge,—
My standard furl'd, then thrown at large.
Then let each Scot attend the word,
And prove his nation by his sword !
And all who give to duty heart,
Shall find me faithful in the sovereign's part.

He said. Each chieftain took his course,
And threw himself amidst his force ;
Array'd each band, each column clos'd ;
Rous'd by their threats the lax dispos'd,
The brave where danger more appear'd :
And by such words as follows, cheer'd

Each labouring host. Rouse ! Scots ! your cause
Is Albyn's freedom, name, and laws !
Your homes, your loves, deliverance craves !
The ashes in your father's graves !
Their spirits, hovering o'er their bones,
Frown, and demur to own you sons !
Rouse ! one great effort more secures
The victory and the booty yours !
Rouse ! vanquish ! and this gallant day's
Remembrance shall transmit your praise
In your applauding children's rhymes
And legends to remotest times.

Thus, or by words of like import,
Did every chief his troops exhort.
But now, involv'd upon its pole,
The royal standard seem'd a scroll :
When straight receded on the plains,
Like a vast wave, the Scottish trains.
Then, for the onset all array'd,
True to their sign, the lion spread,
They rent the air with direful yell,
And on the astonish'd Cimbrians fell.

As when some mountain-lake, with rain
Surcharg'd, descends and sweeps the plain,
And roaring down its headlong course,
Scarce rocks or hills resist its course ;
So fell the Scots upon their foes :
And 'twixt the hosts a crash arose
Like that the awe-struck peasant hears
When heaven in storms the forest tears.
So mixing rose the battle's groan ;
And men, and steeds, and cars, o'erthrown,
In giddy heaps rose wildly round,
And death and wreck deform'd the ground.

Such was the shock. But still the Danes,
To war inured, the fight maintains,
And rag'd anew from wing to van
The battle's direful roar,
Till carnage block'd the field, and ran
The Shochie red with gore ;*

* Tradition says that the Shochie, a small river, or rivulet, in the neighbourhood, ran red with blood on the day of this battle.

And but one fate seem'd to abide
Their rage — each host by each destroy'd.*

But, thus oppos'd, at length the Danes
Began to swerve through all their trains ;
And in disorder'd files give back,
With ardour sunk, and effort slack :
And thus, as fail'd their valour's glow,
Were press'd by their reviving foe ;
Till, sunk their hopes, their courage flown,
Their pride, and martial front o'erthrown,
They broke their lines, and, struck with dread,
In rout and wild confusion fled.

And now, as when arous'd in haste
The north wind sweeps the wintry waste,
And, toss'd before its current, flows
In flaky seas the sifted snows,
So pour'd along the dusty plains
The flying and pursuing trains ;

* It was not uncommon, in those days, for two opposing bands to fight till they were nearly all exterminated.

Whilst to the routed Danes appear
No stimulant their flight to cheer,
But who, the last, should sink beneath
The ruthless victor's sword in death.

But the dread hour, when hope seems past
And pressing ruin strikes aghast
The feeble, is the reign assign'd
For action in the mighty mind.
Great Huba, when his army fled,
Upbraided not, but foremost led
Their flight ; descrying good in ill ;
And rul'd their rout towards the hill
Where first the armies, in their might,
Join'd boastfully the wasteful fight.
And thither, as his legions pour'd
With trembling haste from fate abhorr'd,
He staid their terror, clos'd their ranks,
And form'd them in a deep phalanx,
Close wedg'd with spears on every side,
Which the advancing Scots defied.
And having thus restor'd his host
To confidence and courage lost,

And front to their assailants proof,
While stood the halting Scots aloof,
The frowning hero round them press'd,
And thus his crowded bands address'd.

Cimbrians! whose arms so long have spread
Through every land dismay and dread ;*
Yield ye your country's glory thus ?
Give you your lives to certain loss ?
Your treasur'd spoils resign ye so,
To plume a spent and beaten foe ?
But fame, if basely you despise,
And dastardly would yield the prize
Of victory, as a ransom cheap
With life and safety to escape ;
The hope were vain : in hostile land
You stand inclos'd ; on distant strand
Your ships are moor'd ; and, mark my voice,
But this alternative 's your choice :
Resume your courage, rouse your might,
Return, and conquer in the fight ;

* The Danes were, about this time, the terror of all the nations near.

Or look no man of all your host
To reach alive the Cimbrian coast !
Say ! are you then resolv'd to fly,
In heaps ingloriously to die ?
Or conquer ! and reward your toil,
And venge your race by Albyn's spoil ?

He ceas'd. Through all his host aghast,
His warning words his captains past.
When, by their chief's reproaches, gall'd
The noble, and the base appall'd ;
But all excited by despair :
Midst clangs of arms that rent the air
The host divided left and right,
And fronted to renew the fight ;
And all, or to be gain'd, or lost,
Each chief, determin'd, took his post.

Meanwhile the Scots, yet with the glow
Of vantage warm, observed the foe
With scorn ; and, in their might secure,
Advanc'd, as to a victory sure.
But thus, while haplessly elate
With surety of the battle's fate,

The Scots to erring joy were given ;
The Cimbrians by their danger driven
To fury, rais'd, their host throughout,
“ A great and universal shout ; ” *
And in the tempest of their might
Pour'd dreadful forward to the fight.

Appalling hour ! for, such their course —
Such their resistless onset's force,
That, instant, struck with wild dismay,
The Scots on both their wings gave way ;
And, many chosen leaders slain,
And all attempts to rally vain,
Soon fled, entire, before the foe
In wild remed'less overthrow.
Except that with the king remain'd,
By faithful loyalty constrain'd,
A valiant few, who round him stood,
Resolv'd to mix with his their blood ;
For, the infuriate foe to shun,
Or chance or hope appear'd there none.

* Those are the words used by the historian, speaking of this event.

And now, deserted 'mid the plain,
By all but this determin'd train,
King Kenneth saw, transfix'd by wo,
Pursued and slaughtered by the foe,
The remnant of his broken host ;
And view'd, in mind, his kingdom lost ;
His people of a foreign sway,
Or of the ruthless sword the prey.

Such were his thoughts, if thoughts defin'd
Then pass'd the troubled monarch's mind.
But who the scene, in Bertha towers,
Of horror shall portray,
When thus prevail'd the Cimbrian powers,
And Scotland's bands gave way ?
Who paint the joys, when morning rose
In Bertha streets, and now the woes ?
And how shall be by words defin'd
The pangs of beauteous Inva's mind ;
Who, since the fatal night, had there
Been in the convent's guardian care.

Already, for her house's woes,
And that she was the guiltless cause,

She had exhausted all her tears ;
But new were to her mind the fears
Of an incens'd and cruel foe ;
And, rapt in agonies of wo,
Where is he now, she cried, who staid
My ruin at the fatal raid ?
Oh, grants not heaven to him the power
To aid me in this awful hour ?
And where my sire, and brother ? vain
My plaints ! they all are, doubtless, slain.

Thus mourn'd, alone, the hapless fair.
At length the abbess and her care
She join'd, and all incessant sought
The aid of heaven in prayer devout.
But heaven, which, in the hour of wo,
Oft grants the prayer sincere ;
Seem'd from the suppliants to withdraw,
And turn away its ear :
The final hour of Scotland's fate
Seem'd now decreed by Danish hate.
For to destroy her flying trains
Determin'd, the infuriate Danes

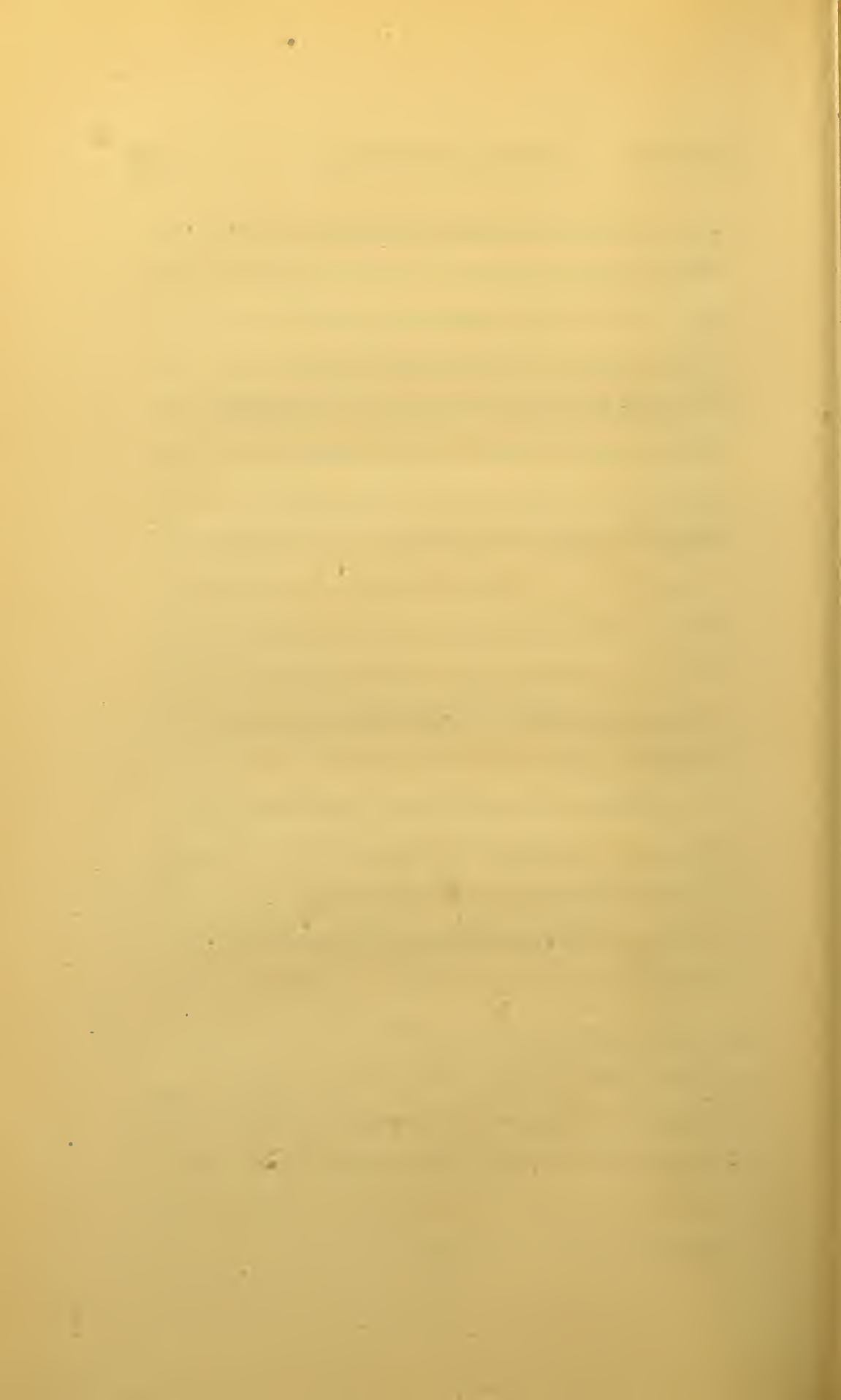
Now off their weighty armour threw,*
With less incumbrance to pursue :
And ponderous cuirasses, defac'd
By blows, and paldrons, in their haste
Thrown off, and scatter'd careless round,
And casques and gorgets strew'd the ground.
And now, pursuing in their might,
Their war-worn bodies bare to sight,
And long and wildly in the air
Streaming their fiery beards and hair,
The Cimbrian bands a scene display,
Strange, past imagining in modern day.

Meanwhile the flying Scots, by dread
Impell'd, who farthe foe outsped ;
Now pour'd along the sounding plain
A wild tumultuous crowd, to gain

* This was done on some occasions about this period. King Indolphus, who reigned previous to King Kenneth's brother, Duphus, lost his life through throwing off his armour to pursue the flying Danes, in a previous battle with another band of them.

The woods and fastnesses in view,
Whose passes and retreats they knew ;
And where, they trusted, if pursu'd,
They might the Danish rage elude ;
For such their plight that, now, of nought
But to escape with life they thought :
And all their nation's pride and boast
Seem'd in one hour of dastard terror lost.

END OF CANTO VII.



CANTO VIII.

THUS fled the Scots ; and, urg'd by feud
Relentless, thus the Danes pursu'd ;
Their victory sure, as they esteem'd,
And so to human eye it seem'd.
But mark events. And now proclaim,
O Muse ! with all the mouths of fame,
A tale, whose like, by truth controll'd,
Has never been by poet told ;
An act to which all history's page
No semblance yields in any land or age.
And come, bright spirit ! come, divine
Imagination ! and combine
The shapes of early time that rise,
As yet obscure, to fancy's eyes ;
'Lume, by thy light, the rising scene to truth,
And give immortal worth, immortal youth.

The fateful field of battle lay
Adjacent to the farm of Hay,
The peasant strong, whom, from the flood
Of Tay, Gilwarden had rescu'd,
And who so much, when further known,
That youthful chief's surprise had drawn.
At plough upon a neighbouring height
Hay, and his sons, had view'd the fight :
For, when the country people fled
In terror, they had dauntless staid,
And ply'd their ploughs, in proud disdain
Of danger, near the battle plain.
And though they shunn'd the conflict's jar,
From ignorance of arms and war ;
They had resolv'd, if chance ensu'd,
To aid their country's cause as best they could.

Hence, often, while the battle rag'd,
Their souls in its events engag'd,
They'd from their toil abstracted stand,
And mark, and praise each Scottish band
That stood the bravest to the fight :
Or, when a clan would rouse their might

And pierce the columns of the foe ;
Warm'd by the deed, their hearts would glow ;
They 'd wave their bonnets all, and raise
A shout of triumph to their praise.

Thus, with his sons, as he pursu'd
His labour, Hay the fight had view'd ;
Had seen his country's bands oppose
In war's heroic field their foes,
As he had heard, with rapture, told
Of heroes in the days of old.
Thus he had mus'd, as on the height
He plied his plough ; his country's might
Confiding in, and all secure
That victory to her arms was sure.
But who his portraiture shall draw —
His rage, and horror — when he saw
Her broken army now pursued
A scattered crowd, to where he stood ?
He seem'd as starting from a dream
Of horror ! blank, and mute, their team
His sons resign'd ; and all, subdu'd
By wild surprise, the flight a moment view'd.

But when, from the astounding shock
Of first amazement, Hay awoke ;
And saw the Scots their flight pursu'd
Towards the passes of the wood ;
Mov'd by the daring of a soul
That spurns example's tame control,
Forming in mind the vast essay
There to attempt the troops to stay ;
He cried,—Get, each, some dreadful tree
Or club, my sons ! and follow me.
Then, bounding forward as he spoke,
He loos'd his oxen, seized their yoke ;
Rear'd it in air, and, at each hand
A son supplied to his command,
Into the pass where thickest flew
The Scots, himself he fiercely threw ;
And, while the flying troops pour'd on,
In reeling heaps, the foe to shun,
There stood the men, and, shouting, swung
Amongst the wildly-rushing throng,
Their dreadful weapons round in air,
And thus the sire reproach'd their fear :

Scots! are ye Scots! from glory's strife
Who fly to save a dastard life?

Claim ye their nation's name?
Are ye the race — the sons of they
Who fought the Danes in Gregory's day —
That now your country thus betray?

Turn! brothers, turn! for shame!
Return with us against the Dane,
To conquer, or to die like men!

Thus Hay, exhortingly, address'd
The fugitives who past him press'd.
By mildness trusting to retrieve
Their courage, and their fears relieve.
But when he saw no words avail'd,
When counsel and reproaches fail'd
To stay their rout; and still the throng
Pour'd deaf and heedlessly along;
He, rearing his tremendous yoke,
Amid the crowd advancing broke,

And, lifeless, to the plains,
While sunk the nearest 'neath his stroke,
He cried with voice, like thunder-shock,
Turn, traitors! we are Danes!

To every Scot who 'tempts this pass,
Deserter of his country's cause
In this its hour of peril, we
Are Danes ! and dreadful Danes will be !

This said, athwart the opening stood
The men, in attitudes which would,
Have demons in their course deterr'd,
And all who now approach'd them dar'd.
When struck with superstitious fright
At so unwont and strange a sight,
The timid, trembling, stood aloof ;
While others, stung by Hay's reproof,
Others, who less had fled from fear
Than hurrying of the crowd, drew near,
And join'd the men the troops to stay :
And by whose art in war's array,
Their ranks along the woods were thrown
Before the Danes in force came on.

Now, rallied, stood collecting breath
The Scots, while up the slope beneath,
By victory flush'd, and scorning fear,
The Danes exultingly drew near.

When from the Scots the Hays sprung forth,
Fell prostrate and embrac'd the earth,*

And with devotion cried ;

Land of our sires ! from alien shame

We go to wrest thy hallow'd name,

Or in the glorious conflict's flame

Die ! as our fathers died !

Then rising, with a shout to cheer

Them on ; and, as if aids were near,

All crying out, “ There's help at hand ! ” †

And, follow'd by the Scottish band,

They round their heads their weapons threw,

And on th' astonish'd Cimbrians flew ;

As lions, when by hunger gall'd,

Seek the champaign, and pierce the fold,

* At the battle of Agincourt some of the English troops are said to have thus prostrated themselves, before the battle began, and taken portions of the earth into their mouths, as the last sacrament, to prepare them for death. Such was the enthusiasm that sometimes attended ancient warfare.

† These words were the cry which led this onset.— See history.

Beneath their grasp their victims die,
O'er head the torn fleeces fly,
And all is outcry, death, and fear,
The dreadful visitation near.
So fell the peasants on their foes :
And where their awful weapons rose,
Swords flew like reeds, and spears like straws.

And arts of war were vain ;
So round the men the Cimbrians die,
Their naked scalps dissevered fly,
And consternation's ghastly cry
Runs frightful through the plain.

Thus were the Danes dispers'd, and cheer'd
The Scots, where'er the men appear'd.
When Huba, who his army's rear
Urg'd to pursuit, unknown to fear,
As confident the day was won,
At the alarm came furious on ;
And doubting, when he saw the jar,
Whether the shapes the Scottish war
Who led, were fiends or men ;

He rush'd, astonish'd, 'midst his host
To view them, and, as thus he cross'd
The peasant's front, his splendid guise
Upon him drew the father's eyes ;
Who, rearing his tremendous yoke
Impetuous as the lightning's stroke,
Brought with its art-contemning shock
 The warrior to the plain ;
When, strong and rapid as the first,
A second blow's resistless thrust
 Stretch'd him amongst the slain.

The Danes, who had the Scots withstood
'Till then, though broken, unsubdued ;
Now by their leader's fall distress'd,
And by the foe with fury press'd,
Resign'd through all their band the fight,
In dreadful and distracted flight ;
By the destroying Scots pursued,
Till covered in a pathless wood :
Whence, by the night at length conceal'd,
The few who 'scap'd the carnag'd field

Upon their rafts re-cross'd the Tay,
And sped to Ænias' shore their way.
Where, to their fleet, with mutual wail,
They told the war's eventful tale ;
The deeds of vengeance they had done —
The battle — and, when it was won,
That giants, risen from the earth,
Or demons from the deep broke forth,
Had, midst its pride, in victory's hour,
Destroy'd the hope of Cimbria's power.
And so their fleet the story bore
Home to their long-lamenting shore.

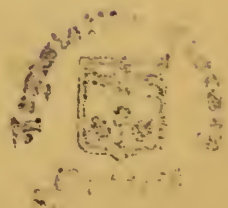
While pass'd th' events that thus the lay
Adventurous, labours to portray,
King Kenneth, lost to hope, had staid,
As when at first his army fled,
With his devoted faithful train,
Resign'd to fate, amid the plain.
Whence, as illusion vain, he view'd
The army rallying at the wood,
Look'd, as if in a dream, upon
The fight, when there it seem'd restor'd :

But when he saw the foe o'erthrown,
Upon his burning senses pour'd
Such joy as drowning men partake
When rescued from a foundering wreck ;
So his fix'd eyes high heaven explor'd,
And a delivering God ador'd.

But now, the fierce pursuit foreborne,
The war-worn heroes slow return ;
And Kenneth through the carnag'd plain
Advanc'd to meet the victor train.
While, with his sons, the patriot Hay,
Discoursing o'er the fatal fray.

Return'd towards their field ;
Glad that their aid had check'd the foe
Who sought their country's overthrow ;
Nor seeking, nor expecting note
For their achievements, 'yond their spot
Of birth ; or praise that neighbouring Scot
In social hour might yield.

Thus they retir'd : but to their late
Obscure and undistinguish'd state,



By destiny it was decreed
They never should again recede.
For now, the dangers and the toils
Of battle o'er : when for their spoils
The troops assembled on the ground,
And drew the chiefs their sovereign round ;
Amaz'd, he ask'd what wondrous fate
Had sav'd them, and the sinking state,
Had victory out of ruin won,
And, 'mid success, the foe o'erthrown ?
When, being of the peasants' told
The strange achievements, scarce controll'd
'Till clos'd the tale, he cried amain,
We see before us no such men !
Stands, then, neglected in the rear,
Men to our gratitude so dear ?
And when, through all the warrior-train
Search for the heroes prov'd in vain,
The generous monarch frowning cried,—
Let heralds seek on every side
Till they are found, for we from here
Remove not till those men appear.

The heralds straight their charge obey'd :
And by the general rumour led
Towards the fields upon the height,
They quickly traced the men in sight :
The father, seated on his plough,
Yet chafing from his mighty brow
The glorious dews its furrows crown'd ;
His sons before him on the ground.

The heralds reverently drew near,
And said, it was their charge to bear
Them to the king. When Hay, with eye
Serene, look'd up and question'd — Why ?
What shall we guess, quoth he, by this ?
Have we done any thing amiss ?*
We fear we can but hardly bring
Our tongues to phrase meet for a king ;
But if his will be as ye say,
We will not — shall not — disobey.

* It is amongst the traditionary stories that I have heard of this event, that Hay did really ask the messengers who came to bring him and his sons to the king, whether they had done any thing amiss ?

Then, risen, he cried amain,
Come, sons ! let's to those gentle folk ;
But, " take care of the clubs and yoke,"*
The Danes may turn again.

Now, by the heralds led, the men
Repair'd towards the royal train ;
Now through the chiefs attending pass'd,
Who stood at their approach aghast ;
And, arm'd each with his weapon rude,
Before the wondering monarch stood.

The king, them, mute, a moment eyed ;
Then, rapt in generous passion, cried,—
Brave men ! the deeds which you have done
Has in our heart due value won ;
And to your place in our regard
Your country shall your worth reward.
But say, what secret power could sway
Men such as you to such essay ?

* This, also, says tradition, was one of Hay's memorable orders at the time.

Have you been long inur'd to fare
In war, that you could fearless dare,
Unarm'd, to rush the sword beneath,
And brave the flying shafts of death?
Is your apparent humble state
The true decipher of your fate?
Or in those guises shall we trace
The blood of some illustrious race,
For hidden cause who veil their line,
And their true character decline?
Speak, we beseech you, freely forth
Your names, your true estate, and birth.

The rustic father reverend eyed
The king, and mildly thus replied:
Liege lord! your servants, till to-day,
Have never seen the embattl'd fray:
To war we never train'd have been,
Nor practis'd to the spear or skeyn:
But we our country duly lov'd;
And, in its evil hour, were mov'd
To help, as chance and nature gave
Us means, it from the foe to save;

And, doing so, right well we trow
We did no more than was our due.*
Your majesty, in pleasure, saith
Had we not fear of bodily skeath ?
Woeworth the arm that fear withdraws,
When call'd to back a worthy cause ;
And ne'er, I trust, that rot shall pine
Or blanch the blood of me, or mine.
Our lot is as the king may see ;
Humble our portion and degree.
In yonder fields, and others near,
To tend the labours of the year,
Past mind has been our race's lot ;
And there, between our toils and cot,

* In the first legendary account I heard of this story, which was when I was very young, great humour and drollery is ascribed to Hay, in his answers to the wonder that was made of his exploits in the battle (from which, it would appear, he himself held them very lightly) : but as the chief joke he was said to make on the subject refers to the difficulties of his domestic rule at home, and some married ladies might think he was unnecessarily sarcastic on their order, I have abstained from giving the same.

We pass in peace our humble day,
Content with fate — our name is Hay.

Applauses rose on every side ;
The king, with looks benign, replied,—
Worthy to fare with kings, and stand
Amongst the nobles of the land ;
Scotland, from this immortal day,
Down to remotest years,
Shall rank your name,— the name of Hay,
Amongst her proudest peers.
Then, calling his attendant train,
The patriot monarch cried amain —
Bring costly robes and garments meet,
And clothe the heroes to their state ;
Let victory's trophies glad the air ;
The splendid cavalcade prepare ;
And let the immortal patriots lead
Our train, as we to Berth* proceed.
That all may see them, all may know
To whom we this so great deliverance owe.

* The name of the town of Perth was written Berth, or Bertha, about this time.

Now robes with costly 'broidery wrought
Were to the heroes quickly brought ;
But they, in modesty refin'd,
The gay accomplishments declin'd :
And, when to their acceptance press'd,
Thus Hay again the king address'd :
Liege lord, let not my words offend ;
If 'tis your pleasure to commend
That we to Berth your train attend,

We duteously obey :

But hardly know we how to wear
Such gauds as those ; or to appear
And proudly tempt the public jeer
In such unwont array.

Of homely garb, our race and name
Have never known reproach or blame ;
And if our wearings are to sight
Less seemly for the dusty fight,
That evil we can thus* remove,
And serve the king with honest love.

* “ When Hay was brought to the king, having rich and splendid garments offered to him and his sons, that they might be the more distinguished on their entrance into Perth, he

The king, of gravity beguil'd,
At Hay's ingenuous scruples smil'd :
But warm'd by his intrinsic worth,
Thus answer'd him in friendly mirth.

Well, thane, a truce to sorrow ;
Thus far we haste to honour Hay,
He shall control the king to-day ;
To yield in turn to-morrow.

But now the king, before whose mind
Still all his duties lay defin'd,
Roll'd round his chiefs his searching eyes,
And spoke them thus, with frequent sighs.
Brave warriors ; scarce our numbers teem
As did they in the morning's beam ;
For many a noble head is laid
Since then, alas ! in solemn bed.
But painful duties we defer,
The living now must be our care.

refused them : only he wiped away the dust off his coat, which he wore every day, and carrying the yoke which he used in the fight, so he entered the city."—*Buchanan's History*.

And for your valiant acts to-day
First, grateful thanks, O chiefs, we pay :
All have not equal glory met,
But all have been in duty great ;
And each, unfailingly, shall prove,
In his degree, our grace and love.
And let each chief, who in the fight
Has mark'd around him men of might,
Cause such, without delay, be sought,
And duly to our presence brought ;
For in such men our vigour lies,
And we must keep them in our eyes.
Many of us remark have gain'd,
And we to all will well attend.
But in my special notice fell
A warrior arm'd in sable mail ;
A man of passing skill and might
Who seem'd at large to roam the fight,
Detach'd from every warlike band,
And neither gave, nor own'd command ;
Saw any that mysterious man ?
Or was he known to any clan ?
When many said he drew their eyes ;
But who he was none could surmise.

To which the king. A debt of weight
To him we owe ; and he must straight
Be found : but will, we fear, in vain
Be sought, unless amongst the slain ;
For he appear'd some fated man,
Given to the law's remed'less ban,
Who, in despair, had sought the strife
To cast away a forfeit life.
His gauntlet, of our train in care,
To trace him by, let heralds bear
Through all the field, and in our name
His form and harnessing proclaim,
Offering, to any will afford
Knowledge of him, a high reward.
Meanwhile, till we shall ascertain
Whether he numbers with the slain,
We tarry here. The heralds sped
Their way, and thus the monarch further said.

Yes, chiefs ; perchance you are not told,
And scarce your faith the tale may hold,
That Angus, from whose crimes arose
So many of our country's woes,

To heap his guilt's o'erwhelming weight
With fratricide, and wreak his spite,
Now fought against us 'mongst the Danes ;
Nay ! drew, he said, upon the land their trains :
For in the battle's heat, disguis'd
A Dane, the traitor me surpris'd ;
And I had fallen, by him overpower'd,
But for that sable warrior's sword ;
Then wonder not that I await
With anxious mind to know his fate.

Amazement 'mongst the chieftains spread :
The rage of some was scarcely staid
From Angus corse ; by some to heaven
Thanks for the king's escape was given ;
And some deplored their fated times
And country blotted by such crimes.
But while they talk'd, the herald train
Charg'd by the king to search the plain,
Return'd, nor had on all the ground,
Nor 'mongst the troops, the stranger found.
But they had with them peasants brought
Who said, that to a wood remote,

One from the field was seen to speed
Whose harness with the glove agreed ;
And that, when first their view he met,
As on a neighbouring height they sat,
They deem'd he was some flying Dane ;
But now they guess'd him Methven's thane,
Who, since his greatness from him fled,
Had in the woods with lonely culdees stay'd.

Scarce on King Kenneth's hearing fell
The words which clos'd the peasants' tale,
When rapt, he cried, 'Twas Methven ! none
But he so greatly could have done.
Thus virtue's beams shoot forth their light
E'en in misfortune's darkest night ;
I in the battle down was borne,
That he might rescue me in scorn,
For having, 'mid his age and woes,
Torn all his honours from his brows.
Alas ! how small, though on a throne,
Seem I to-day to such a man ?
But if, too often, sovereigns must
Be stern, they also may be just.

Go, heralds, through the land proclaim
And publish in our royal name,
Rodardus, Methven's lineal lord,
To all his lands and rights restor'd ;
Not as a boon from us, but on
His right, in battle nobly won ;
By having sav'd, when mid the strife
In peril fallen, the sovereign's life !

The heralds pass'd. The king spoke on :
Nor has great Methven's noble son
The least to day, for valour high
And gallant daring, drawn our eye.
Let him approach. When from the rear
Gilwarden duteously drew near.
And thus the king. Your brave essays
To-day, my lord, demand our praise ;
And when our broken bands by flight
Left us at last in dangerous plight,
You faithfully, we saw, remain'd
One of the few who us sustain'd ;
Be near us still ! Who stood our stay
That hour, we shall not shun in brighter day.

Fail not to-morrow to resort
To Bertha, and attend our court.
Meanwhile, 'tis our express desire
That you will trace your noble sire ;
And charge him, at the morning light
In Berth, as he fought the fight,
T' attend the king ; who shall not doff
His arms, or put his harness off,
Till, with his chiefs and warriors, there
He shall to holy church repair ;
And for the land's deliverance raise
To Heaven the song of grateful praise !

With joy such grace might well inspire
Gilwarden pass'd to seek his sire.
The warriors were again array'd ;
Their banners and their trophies spread ;
And mid the general joy and mirth,
In solemn triumph towards Berth,
Now slowly mov'd the victor bands,
Thus marshall'd by the king's commands.

The heralds, brightly panoplied,
With trumpets the procession led ;

Next in the evening breezes glide
The torn ensigns of Cimbria's pride ;
O'er Scandian streamers, thistles stray,
And o'er the reafons, lions play.
Next, press'd by the astonish'd gaze
Of thousands, pass'd the immortal Hays ;
Great in their native rustic might,
And arm'd as they had fought the fight ;
A spectacle so strangely new,
That it the chief attention drew.*

Bright in his battle-mail, between
His chiefs, was next the monarch seen ;
Cheer'd as he pass'd, and proud to prove
The humblest of his people's love.
Next mov'd the heroes of the war,
Pale, and defac'd by many a scar ;

* The king commanded a great train to follow him (Hay), at a distance, as well as some to go before him ; and such a confluence of people there was at this new spectacle, that he alone took up almost the whole solemnity of the day.'—

Buchanan's History.

While broken weapons, helm, or shield,
Of each the glorious toil reveal'd ;
And all by various titles prove
Their claims upon their country's love.
Next, drawn by oxen, pass'd the plain
The battle's spoils in many a wain,
Which with their ponderous loads, dispos'd
In columns, the procession clos'd.
And thus to Bertha, mid a vast
Applauding crowd, the heroes past.

Now in the town, where late the ear
Met only wailings, complaints, and fear ;
The people's loud and rapturous joys,
To heaven in acclamations rise ;
They bound, they leap, the troops before,
And on them praise and blessing pour ;
They spread to them their household fare,
And close and swathe their wounds with care ;
Till by excess of toil oppress'd,
The wearied warriors sink to rest.

And, having with his chiefs conferr'd,
And his devotions due preferr'd,
The virtuous king retir'd to close
Th' eventful day in brief repose.

END OF CANTO VIII.

CANTO IX.

THUS, for its crimes, Heaven scourg'd the land ;
And thus was stay'd its chastening hand ;
The kingdom, tried by many woes,
Seem'd now like ore refin'd from dross ;
Pass'd through affliction's useful school,
Men bent submissively to rule ;
And pleasing, thence, is the essay
That waits on the resuming lay.

The valiant and mysterious knight
Who sav'd King Kenneth in the fight,
And who to know so much he sought,
Had rightly been great Methven thought.
For now, a lonely culdee's guest,
In a remote and dreary waste,

Thrown cheerless on the chilling ground,
His noble sire Gilwarden found.
Not for his own misfortunes rose,
But for his daughter's, Methven's woes ;
For such had, since the fatal night
At Methven, been their mutual plight ;
So rapidly came on the foe,
Dispensing terror, flight, and wo ;
That yet no time had been to trace
The lady's all-lamented case ;
But all concluded that she lay
In some concealment, misery's prey.

His mighty sire, reduc'd so low
As this, when Lord Gilwarden saw ;
At memory that his house's woes
All from his fatal error rose,
He at a distance stood in dread.
But Methven's anger long had fled ;
And, rais'd upon his iron side,
Come near me, erring boy, he cried ;
I am not sunk in grief so low,
As not to joy to see you so

Cap'rison'd on the battle's day :
It suits thy birth and blood ! away,
And serve the king ! and serve him, too,
With loyalty and fealty true.
But after you are spent by cares,
And wounds, and cloth'd in hoary hairs,
Fume not, if, when your frame is wreck'd,
Your meed be scorn and cold neglect ;
Man's fate it is ! and think not, being brave
And good thee from the common doom will
save.

Grief heav'd Gilwarden's generous breast ;
He knelt, his noble sire embrac'd ;
And cried, Oh ! let not thoughts severe,
My sire belov'd, your nature sear :
No wrongs like those you have to pine ;
The king is generous and benign ;
Twice in the field he me has grac'd
With honours ; he has also trac'd
That it was you his life who sav'd,
When by the traitor Angus brav'd ;

And heralds are, by his command,
Gone to proclaim through all the land
Your titles and estates restor'd ;
And that, in terms that will afford
You honours new. But now, prepare
With me to Bertha to repair ;
For you are, on your fealty, straight
Commanded on the king to wait,
And him to holy church attend
In duty for the victory gain'd ;
And that devout and solemn rite
Will open with the morning light
By all the army, harness'd, shield
And weapons, as they fought the field.

Great Methven rous'd, and seem'd to cheer ;
His eye was brighten'd by a tear ;
And thus he answer'd : Has on me
The king again conferr'd degree
And honour lost ? I deeply mourn
That I can make him no return.
My fealty I cannot renew,
For that from him I ne'er withdrew ;

And little can a spent old man
Add to his reign's illustrious dawn.
I'll, at his call, to court repair ;
But all my powers, for public care,
And public councils, now are pass'd,
They all were in my daughter lost.
Of her, my life's chief light, bereft,
All, all is darkness that is left !

O sire belov'd ! Gilwarden cried,
Let your desponding grief subside,
Till we the king's commands obey
And duteous thanks to Heaven essay.
When, if my sister holds a place
On earth, I her retreat will trace ;
And still a hope lives in my mind
We her in safety yet shall find.
Vain thought ! the chieftain mournful cried,
All hope is past ! she is destroy'd !
But let us to the court, and join
The king in his devout design.
Which said, to Berth they took their way :
And fleecy clouds in heaven announc'd the day.

Sweet on the eye the morning fell,
And on the ear the abbey-bell ;
Whose tones appear'd from heaven to fall,
For earthly gratitude to call.
But not for morning's ling'ring rays
Had halted there the hymn of praise.
All night from Bertha's sacred fanes,
Were hallelujahs heard to flow,
Rais'd by the holy vestal trains,
For safety from the heathen foe.
And none of all were there immur'd,
Who had for heaven the world abjur'd,
More gratitude devout express'd,
Than rose from beauteous Inva's breast.

Now to religion all consign'd,
Her loss of earthly pomp she pin'd
No more ; nor felt for aught regret,
Except her noble father's fate.
For him alone she suffer'd pain.
And now, when all the vestal train
Assembled, with the fathers near,
In public ritual to appear ;

And with the court and army raise
To Heaven the kingdom's general praise :
The only thought that gave her care
Was how she duly might prepare
The solemn public mass to join
Acceptably to grace divine.

Meanwhile the king, in arms who lay,
Rose at the earliest sign of day.
The grooms their various service lend,
The chiefs and seneschals attend ;
And Kenneth soon of those around
Inquir'd if Methven had been found.
When, as he spoke, by Lothian led,
Still in his sable armour clad,
His hoary head in reverence bare,
With looks of grief, distress, and care,
The chieftain, deeply moving all,
Slow entered to the presence-hall,
And feebly, but with homage meet,
Knelt, silent, at the monarch's feet.

The thane's misfortunes, and his worth,
Drew all the nobles' pity forth.

The king arose, in transport strong,
And o'er the bending hero hung ;
And seem'd a moment to forget
His sovereign rank, and kingly state.
But, ruling straight his feeling's tide,
With royal dignity he cried :
Rise, our deliverer ! welcome, thane !
The morning of our rule has been
A stormy and a troubled tide,
Whose wayward gusts has scatter'd wide
Minds form'd to meet ; its rising day
Will yield, we trust, a milder ray.
Strange things have from the times had rise,
And much to talk between us lies ;
But duty now presents a claim
For homage to the power supreme,
Which humbly we proceed to pay,
When festive mirth shall close the day ;
And we, at leisure, of our care,
Or past, or present, will confer.

As ceas'd the monarch, louder fell
Upon the ear the abbey-bell :

The troops advanc'd in solemn files
Along the lofty nave and aisles ;
The palace gates that thither led
Wide for the king and court were spread ;
Around, in hab'liments of state
Attir'd, the royal vergers wait.
When, follow'd by the noble fair,
Who joyous, and devoutly, there
 Had join'd their lords belov'd ;
The king and chiefs, with air serene,
Arm'd all as in the fight they'd been,
 Towards the altar mov'd.

Now issued from their holy fane
Religion's consecrated train ;
The hooded priests in lines before,
The cross's holy symbols bore ;
And in alternate voices raise,
Or in full chorus, hymns of praise.
Next, veil'd impervious to the sight,
Eclips'd by a perpetual night
From earthly things, slow in their rear,
The nuns in solemn train appear.

With whom, and by the abbess led,
And, also, by a veil o'erspread,
Fair Inva was advancing seen ;
 To her devotions deeply given,
And like, in all her air and mien,
 Some 'parted spirit led to heaven.

The altar now the priests inclose,
And loud this general hymn arose,
In all the tones that can refine
The human voice to melody divine.

Glory ! glory ! glory ! bring
Ye to the Lord, our strength and king !*
His arm has triumph'd gloriously,
And from the heathen set us free.
In vain the warrior's sword is drawn,
 His valour, and his might, is vain ;

* I trust I shall not be considered presumptuous in using Scripture language on this occasion of a great national thanksgiving.

In vain he puts his armour on,
Unless the Lord of Hosts sustain.
Glory ! glory ! glory ! bring
Ye to the Lord, our strength and king !
His arm has triumph'd gloriously,
And from the heathen set us free.
His wrath has down their glory cast,
His arm their greatness has o'erthrown ;
Like stubble which the fire has pass'd,
Before his breath their strength has flown.
Glory ! glory ! glory ! bring
Ye to the Lord, our strength and king.
His arm has triumph'd gloriously,
And from the heathen set us free !

Thus long to Heaven, with rapture strong,
A thousand streams of praise were sung :
While mid the rolling anthem's fire,
Still, as from answering angels, rise
O'er all the loud and general quire,
At intervals, in female voice,
“ The Lord has triumph'd gloriously,
And from the heathen set us free ! ”

The final rituals now were said,
And rich oblations duly made ;
And all the vast and solemn choir
Prepar'd in silence to retire.
When Lord Gilwarden, hasting through
Th' assembly, near the abbess drew :
The homage due her order paid,
And faltering with emotion, said —
May I, good lady abbess, know
Who is the maid to whom such grace you
show ?

As victims doom'd, acquittal hear,
So struck his voice his sister's ear :
When wildly back her veil she threw,
And cried, That voice methought I knew.
As instant, sacred though the place,
Gilwarden rush'd to her embrace ;
And on them all the court, amaz'd,
Both chiefs and ladies, silent gaz'd.

But when the first excess of joy
Was past, and beauteous Inva's eye,

Tearful, had view'd the court aside ;
Where is my sire ? she wildly cried :
When Lord Gilwarden, to restrain
Returning grief, exclaim'd amain,
Behold ! he near our sovereign stands,
Restor'd to honour, rank, and lands !
And, having thus recovered thee
Again, from all his sorrows free.

Wild transport flash'd in Inva's face,
She rush'd into her sire's embrace ;
And he to Heaven his thanks devout
Preferring, her sustain'd ;
But while he held her, wrung with doubt,
Tears down his bosom rain'd :
He saw her in the convent's care,—
The plight of many a hapless fair,
Who, to her pristine honour lost,
Is on religion's pity cast :
And that she such might be, his fear
Surpass'd his fortitude to bear.
But while he weeping o'er her hung,
Deep moving all the courtly throng,

The abbeſs, with his doubts impreſs'd,
Him thus, with reverend air, addreſs'd.

Would Methven know, how in my care
His noble daughter came to fare ?
The tale is brief. She, from the rude
Marauders in the caſtle-wood
Was reſcu'd by a generous knight,
Whoſe paſſing ſkill in arms, and might,
Here, then, was much the public theme ;
Sir Edric of the Spur, his name :
And her, from her deliverer kind,
To me a holy prieſt conſign'd :
Since when, ſhe all has been to Heaven,
And ſorrow for her houſe's ſufferings, given.

Is't ſo ? good abbeſs ! Methven cried ;
Did Heaven, in mercy, deign to guide,
In that dread hour, a generous arm
To ſave my ſinking child from harm ?
For this, if years be to me given,
I'll build a fane ſhall raiſe to Heaven

Perpetual incense, on the place
Where interpos'd for me its grace.
Rich gifts, good abbess, for your care,
I on your house shall straight confer ;
But he my daughter's ruin staid,
By Heaven alone can be repaid !
Exclaim'd the chief, with joy oppress'd,
And clasp'd his daughter to his breast.

While pass'd this fond impressive scene,
All near had in deep silence been.
But now the ladies eager press
Round Inva ; and while her distress,
And Heaven-directed rescue, drew
All tongues, from tears abstain'd but few.
And some, at Methven's mimic fight
Who saw the gallant stranger knight
To memory by the abbess call'd,
Again his merits high extoll'd :
Yet wonder'd one so much had done
For Methven's house, its thanks should shun.

But secretly in Inva's mind,
For this was weighty cause assign'd :
She knew she had his suit denied,
And rous'd his noble nature's pride ;
And thence contemplated, with pain,
That him she ne'er might see again.

Thus upon troubles happily past,
Was memory back a moment cast.
But now the king, who, silent, had
To all attended, gaily said,—
Brave Methven, from so sad a plight
To see your daughter safe restor'd,
Does, justly, an extreme delight
To every generous mind afford,
And we abundantly have shar'd
The joy it has on all conferr'd.
But chiefs, and noble ladies all,
Now pass we to the banquet-hall,
Whither we all this presence fair
Bid our best welcome to repair,

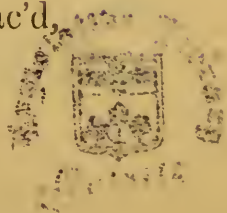
And now let forms a time recede.
Pass, nobles, on : for me, I'll plead
The lady Inva's hand to bear,
Hosts make the stranger chief their care.
Which said the court, in converse gay,
All to the palace took again their way.

END OF CANTO IX.



CANTO X.

THROUGH all the high and solemn scene
That to portray essay'd has been,
The Saxon plaid, which, at the raid,
O'er Inva he who sav'd her spread,
And she had vow'd to ever wear
Her proudest robe, had grac'd the fair.
The mantle's rare device and dies
Had drawn remark of many eyes ;
Oft e'en the king himself had been
As if its beauty marking seen.
And now, as he the blushing maid
Towards the palace gaily led,
With frequent glance he seem'd anew
As it admiringly to view.
At length, when in the hall, a guest
Preferr'd, the beauteous maid was plac'd,



Thus, mild, he spoke. Fair one, I shame
A freak that I've conceiv'd to name,
But in your plaid there seems to lie
Some witch'ry that has charm'd my eye ;
I much should love the robe to wear
If you the boon might kindly spare.

The monarch's suit, set gaily forth,
Fill'd all the thronging court with mirth :
The proudest ladies there had vied
Their richest plaid to have supplied
To such a suit : but Inva's face
Confusion instant seem'd to trace,
A moment mute, with head declin'd,
She sat, and search'd her thoughts to find
Meet answer to request so high. ♦
At length she, thus, made grave reply :

The honour high the king has shewn
Me, by such note, I duteous own :
My robe, alas ! is now decay'd,
Its pile and hues are worn and fled ;
But if the king esteems it fair,
And on such robe has set his care,

I'll order horsemen straight to hie
To England, and the richest buy
That the most cunning workman there
Can with his utmost skill prepare,
And lay the same, with duty meet ;
Before my honour'd sovereign's feet.

She said : and all with wonder heard.
When thus the king, with mild regard :
Shame on the fancy ! noble maid ;
But save that very — very plaid,
No garment wrought in England's sway
Would my most strange conceit allay.
And if it be decay'd, and old,
I care not ; or for pride, or cold !
To others all I'd it prefer,
If you the favour might confer.

To which, with agitated mind,
But feigning ease, she, meek, rejoin'd.—
Alas ! the king is pleas'd to sport ;
He deems the robe suits not his court :
And I, indeed, am indiscreet,
His presence in an alien garb to meet.

But 'tis a thing I idly wear ;
Attendants straight it hence shall bear —
When cried the king,— No ! beauteous maid,
My heart, indeed, is in the plaid.
But from my suit I now refrain,
And pardon crave for giving pain.

Surprise through all the courtiers spread.
Fair Inva's sire and brother pray'd
Her to the king's request to yield.
When low, with tearful eyes, she kneel'd,
And, suppliant, to the monarch said,—
Forgive, O, sire ! a simple maid :
The robe, which I withhold with pain,
A vow has bound me to retain,
Ne'er from it, through life, to part ;
It is his gift who holds my plighted heart.

The monarch, rising, kindly seiz'd
Her hand ; and cried, whilst her he rais'd,—
Forgive my boldness, gentle fair,
That such a suit I've press'd ;
But be reliev'd from farther care —
I blush at my request.

Indeed, 'tis strange, upon a day
When bounty I should chief display,
That thus amidst my nobles all,
To sue for favours I should fall.
But for the fault I stand reprov'd ;
And, to redeem myself, am mov'd
Even now to vouch my bounty free :
And first, fair lady, I'll begin with thee.

He said ; his leftward paldron threw
Aside, and off his gauntlet drew ;
A chain that grac'd his arm untied,
And thus with gay expression cried,—
Here is a trinket, noble maid,
Of which fair ladies much have said ;
I won it, once, when I a knight
Encounter'd in eventful fight :
Accept the boon ; I it award
In token of my high regard.

With homage which such grace became,
The maid receiv'd the brilliant gem ;
But when it nearer met her eyes,
She seem'd transfix'd with wild surprise.

'Twas that which to the stranger knight
She gave at Methven's mimic fight.
And now, while heav'd her throbbing breast,
With faltering voice she thus the king address d.

The king has said, he, in a fight
Eventful, won this well-known chain ;
Alas ! I trust the noble knight,
Who wore the bracelet, was not slain ?
Fair lady, he was wounded, sure,
Past power of surgery to cure,
Replied the king. When sunk the maid
Upon her sire, and weeping, said, —
'Twas he who fought in Methven field,
And was from Angus' rage my shield !
Alas ! Sir Edric of the Spur,
My brave deliverer, is no more !
Oh, let it not displease my sire
That I to breathe my griefs retire ;
To him my heart by vow was given !
And he no more,—it is transferr'd to Heaven !

But in this sudden burst of grief
Scarce Inva's heart had sought relief,

When cried the king,— How! noble maid,
'Tis pity thus my gift has sped :
A pity 'tis that tears or sighs,
On day of joy like this, should rise.

'Mongst Scotland's youthful noble race
Is many a gallant form and face ;
But if they all must sigh in vain
Against a hare-brain'd Saxon thane,
Let sorrow's heavy thoughts no more

 Your gentle bosom wring :
Behold Sir Edric of the Spur

 In Kenneth, Scotland's king !
Which saying, off his helm he rais'd ;
And, while the court beheld, amaz'd,
His splendid cuirass by he laid,
And stood before the trembling maid,
As he in Methven's lonely grove
Submissively had sued her love.

 She sunk to kneel. Nay, rise! he cried,
Our future queen and present bride :
It has been our caprice to prove
If we had gifts might win your love ;

And for your pain in the essay,
Our future kindness shall repay.
Which said, with tenderness he press'd
The trembling fair one to his breast ;
And led her, powerless of reply,
From wonder, mix'd with love and joy,
At the transitions of her fate,
And plac'd her in the place of state.
Then, to the court : And ye who were
At Methven's tilts, and saw us there
After long absence, first demand
Th' observance of our native land ;
Know that our purpose was, to prove,
How for us stood our country's love ;
To search the crimes which Moray stain'd,
And try what weight we in the state retain'd.
Th' events that since from time has grown,
To all of us alike are known :
And let us not, repining, cast
Invidious memory on the past ;
But, from this mighty epoch, move
With forward course our worth to prove.

The monarch paus'd ; and, round him, joy
And concord lighted every eye.
Then thus resum'd : Now let the feast
Be served, our seneschals, with haste :
Wide let the palace gates be laid ;
And thence, let there be tables spread
Through all the ways with bounteous fare,
That all who list may freely share.

The summons straight was pass'd ; and wide
The banquet rose on every side.
And while from steaming beeves and deer
Was ceaseless serv'd the generous cheer,
Wine flow'd ; and wit, and playful joke,
Pass'd round, unvarnish'd as they woke,
Till every heart and sense flow'd high
With mirth, festivity, and joy.

Thus gladness sounded, 'mongst the crowd
Without the palace, long and loud :
But in the royal banquet hall,
The king, still rul'd by duty's call,
And ever pondering o'er in thought
The great event the Hays had wrought ;

As soon as had the feasting ceas'd,
Now, thus the mighty sire address'd.

Now, Hay, as from the ruthless foe
Our rescue all to you we owe ;
We shall, as soon as forms allow,
Your house with noble rank endow :
And of the lands which east from high
Kinnoul in verdant prospect lie,
From Angus fallen, you shall obtain
And ever hold your free domain.
And though they fertile are, and fair,
In measurement we shall not spare ;
Nor niggardly, or nicely, search
For custom, on a rood, or perch ;
But, as the fight you for us won
By means to war before unknown,
So we will you reward by rule
That shall be new to measure's school.
Know, then, we leave it to your choice,
And give us, three days hence, your voice ;
Whether you'll take your boundaries on
The square extent shall lie

Within the space a hound may run,
Or a train'd falcon fly.
From high Kinnoul the start shall be ;
Prepare your mind ! your choice is free !

To hear the king, the courtier throng
Burst forth in laughter loud and long :
All minds were instant on the wing,
To share the sport the day would bring ;
And some their calculations tried
The choice of noble Hay to guide ;
He, and his valiant sons, the while
All listening, too, with modest smile.
Till thus the king : And, ladies fair,
And chieftains, let it be your care
All to attend us to the field,
And share the mirth the feat shall yield.
When all, assenting, pleas'd, and gay
With wine and mirth, took each their several
way.

Now morn again her light unfolds
O'er Bertha's peaceful towers and holds ;

And came the royal nuptials on.
But great Rodardus' house alone
Attended : thus the king thought meet
The high solemnity to greet.
When straight to royal Scone he pass'd ;
That he might, in retirement, cast
O'er in his mind, and duly weigh,
The projects of his future sway.

At length arriv'd the promis'd day
To grant his well-earn'd lands to Hay.
And such a day, and such a scene,
Old Tay before had never seen.
Fame of the feats the Hays had done,
Had through the kingdom widely flown :
But scarce with more surprise was heard
Than was the mode of their reward ;
And it to witness, and await
Its issue, seem'd all Scotland met.

The morning rose serene and clear,
Throngs under high Kinnoul appear ;
Horns through the distance shrilly sound,
With yelps and neighs the hills resound ;

The hawks are perch'd in leses gay,
The leash the hounds can scarcely stay ;
And many a dame of high degree,
And lordly thane, and hunter free,
All glee, had at the dawn been there,
Intent the rousing sport to share.
And when the Hays had join'd the field,
The cheers that, to salute them, peal'd
Through all the vast and mirthful throng,
Were deaf'ning loud, and lasted long,
For all degrees seem'd pleas'd to pay
To them the honours of the day.

At length towards the merry scene
Advanc'd, in state, the king and queen ;
And, plaudits loyally preferr'd,
When they had in abundance shar'd ;
And Hay was to the presence led,
To him the king thus, gaily, said :
Now, thane, our hounds are fleet and young,
Our falcons are of pinions strong ;
On which do you election place,
The boundaries of your lands to trace ?

When, mildly, Hay : My sovereign lord,
In that a choice I dare not word ;
The grace with thee has, solely, birth ;
I dare not set its measure forth.

Nay ! cried the king, it cannot be !
Choice you must make ! and it is free.
When thus the queen, with look benign :
My lord, let, then, the choice be mine.
Brave thane, here is a noble bird,
She knows my sign, she knows my word,
If her you choose, I dare believe
You at her flight will nothing grieve.
It shall be as the queen has said ;
Quoth Hay, and, reverend, bow'd his head.

Now, smiling, deign'd the queen to take
The bells from her gyrfalcon's neck ;
And whilst the falconers round prepare
Their birds, that all the sport may share,
Hers to her neck she fondly drew,
And said, as if her words it knew,
Go, noble bird, to yonder light,
The rising sun, direct your flight ;

Go, bird, and all your mates outfly ;
And mind the lure, and mind the cry.
When from her hand the falcon soar'd ;
And east the thronging sportsmen pour'd.

The falcons round successive rise ;
Wide spread the mirth, and mixing cries,
Still eastward pour'd the sportive crew,
And on the feather'd coursers drew ;
But, mounted on his swiftest steed,
Gilwarden kept of all the lead,
And by his practis'd signs and cries,
His sister's bird, who knew his voice,
Still eastward lur'd he on :
Till, far the sportive train outflown,
And winging now the air alone,
Of further flight reluctant grown,
It sunk on Errol stone ;*
And there, when drew the sportsmen round,
The queen's gyrfhawk was perching found.

* The stone on which the falcon is said to have alighted, is (I have been told) yet preserved at Errol, and still bears the name of The Falcon's Stone.

Straight to the court, who now came on,
The falcon's perching was made known ;
And when the king the bird beheld,
He Hay the thane of Errol hail'd,
And wish'd him, with a look benign,
A long and an illustrious line.

Thus, on that proud and joyous day,
Was granted to the hero Hay
Full ten miles square, from bound to bound,
Of Scotland's fairest, richest ground.
He with nobility was grac'd ;
Arms for his house and line were trac'd,
On which three shining shields were grav'd,
For the three men who Scotland sav'd,
And with their mighty clubs and yoke,
Their deeds to future ages spoke.
And Loncarty's immortal day,
And that which gave his lands to Hay,
Were, ages after, held as high
And glorious festivals of joy.

THE
WITCH OF FORRES.



THE
WITCH OF FORRES.*

THE hour was near when witchcraft fell
Performs the mystic rite of hell,

* King Duphus, whose tragic fate is introduced in the second canto of the preceding poem, was, it would seem, not only beset, during his short reign, by treason and rebellion, in all its Gorgon shapes, but also by witchcraft; and, the account of it, in the history, having so much in it of the same business-like manner of practising the craft of witching that I, when a child, heard many tales about from “the spinsters and knitters,” not “in the sun,” but by the oil-lamp in the dark winter nights at home,—I was tempted, while about the Poem, to take up the story in the following verses: and the lady of Forres being all but a fiend in character, and it appearing that ladies of those days did not always disdain trying their hands

Whose force unclasps the book of fate :
Lone in her hall the lady sat ;
While rapid o'er her brooding mind
Roll'd visions dark and undefin'd.

in the vulgar craft of witching, I have made her the witch. The story in the history runs thus :

“ Amidst those confusions, the king was seized with a new and unusual disease ; his body wasted and pined away by continual sweating, and his physicians, who were sent for far and near, knew not what to apply for his relief. * * * At length, something being blabbed out by the daughter of a woman who was noted for a witch, the whole conspiracy was discovered. * * * Search being made by a party of soldiers, this woman, with others, were found *roasting* the king's picture, made of wax, by a soft fire ; the intent being, that as the wax did leisurely melt, so the king, being dissolved into a sweat, should pine away by degrees, and, when the wax was quite consumed, should die. And so, accordingly, when the witches were seized and punished (in what manner is not said) and the king's image of wax was broken, he speedily recovered from his disease.”—*Buchanan*.

N.B. It is necessary to state, that the historian gives this only as a tradition.

She wish'd the wish : no latch, or bar,
In Forres' towers was heard to jar ;
In court, or stair, or vaulted hall,
No foot, approaching, heard to fall ;
Yet, wide her chamber portal flew,
And near a form terrific drew.
No sex distinct the shape defin'd ;
Yet most it seem'd of female kind,
But far surpassing earthly size ;
And, save its brows and flaming eyes,
A mantle, black as funeral pall,
From crown to heel envelop'd all.

Mute stood the form ; the lady saw,
And felt, a moment, mortal awe ;
But, rousing straight, with threatful lower
She round her drew the ring of power,
Said backward, thrice, the awful word ;
And thus address'd the shape abhorr'd.

Mista ! Odin's dreadful maid !
Who tend'st the spirits of the dead ;

Who know'st, with future piercing ken,
The mortal fates of living men ;
I summon thee, if 'tis in hell,
Or in Valkala* known, to tell
What, of the man I fear and hate,
Is the reserv'd decree of fate ?

Too venturous mortal ! in thy pride,
With hollow voice the shape replied,
Why did'st thou me from Odin's hall
On trivial earthly purpose call ?
Since Jewry's † cross in Albion rose
The rites of Odin to oppose,

* Valkala, the heaven of ancient northern theology.

† I have, when a child, heard old women, who seriously believed in the power of witchcraft, speaking of it as a thing then nearly gone by, and devoutly thanking Heaven that " the light of the Gospel " was now fast driving all these machinations of Satan out of the land. And there is, doubtless, more philosophy in this than is found in many of the sayings ascribed to old women.

The Valkyriur* this upper sphere
Visit with grudge, and oft with fear.
Thy daring might have cost thee dear —
But, it is done; and thou shalt hear.

Thrice I to awful Lok's† abode
Have down the sunless regions rode;
And deep in ninefold night obscure
Where fate its dark decrees immure,
Have ask'd: and this is the reply:
“ The hated man shall timeless die.”
But whether he falls by spell or steel,
Not yet will fate to flesh reveal.
But haste thee hence to Hurtle cave,
The sisters there your presence crave;
There they lay the worsted thread,
And smelt the wax to try the deed;
To-night at Lochindorb he lies;
And if he lives your kinsman dies!

* The Valkyriur were female divinities, servants of Odin.

† Lok was the evil spirit, according to the same theology.

Ha! Lochindorb to-night! exclaim'd
The witch, with burning hate inflam'd;
'Scap'd yet my spell! is he so near?
Say, I adjure thee! comes he here?
Comes he to Forres' towers? she cried —
But spent her voice on silent void:
The spirit dark, with angry glare,
Chang'd, as she spoke, to viewless air;
While thunder o'er the castle roll'd
That shook it to its inmost hold;
And, on the ground unconscious cast,
The dame a moment, swooning, pass'd.

But straight to wonted sense restor'd,
She rose; when on her memory pour'd
The parting hint the demon gave,
That, by her crew at Hurtle cave,
Her aid that night was in request,
And thither she resolv'd to haste;
And scarce resolv'd, when with the blast
The castle mounds she viewless pass'd.
For long, of old, as legends tell,
Ere yet, to drive the powers of hell

From earth, and scatter heathen night,
Had fully risen the Gospel light,—
Who knew the arts which Githa knew,
Could nature in their frames subdue ;
Could take of birds or beasts of prey
The forms at pleasure ; could betray
The human eye, and flood, or hill
Traverse invisible at will.

Now o'er the heath the lightning scour'd
And thunders peal'd, and torrents pour'd ;
And every thing of earthly form
Had shelter'd from the midnight storm ;
But Githa, to the tempest dread
Impervious, through its terrors sped ;
And to the cavern, shunn'd in fear
By human tread, at length drew near ;
Yet, smote with inward fear of guile —
A fear which ever haunts the vile—
She paus'd, as she approach'd the fell
Retreat, to prove that all was well.
But learning, from the steams impure
Thence issuing, that all was sure ;

She entered ; and her wizzard crew,
With hideous welcomes, round her drew,
But mov'd no lip ; for human word
Would then have marr'd the spell abhorr'd.

Dark Githa round the cavern glar'd ;
The fatal fire she saw prepared ;
The night-shade, and the hemlock dread,
The softened wax, and worsted thread ;
And round her fell subservient crew
A look of approbation threw.

Now, clenching wither'd hand in hand,
The hags of malice round her stand ;
And while with hate her bosom blaz'd,
She, muttering imprecations, seiz'd
The passive wax, which in her hold
With speed assum'd a human mould :
Still o'er the shape her fingers flew ;
Still more to manly form it grew ;
And, all the shape at length express'd,
On it a kingly crown she plac'd ;

And oe'r the breast, where life pervades
The human frame, involv'd the threads.

Now near the weirded flame she drew.
The poisonous herbage on it threw,
And plac'd the form, in feigned state
Enthron'd, before the fatal heat,
So that its substance thence might thaw
And waste to naught by progress slow.
When round the fire the trait'rous throng,
Slow moving, thus, in chorus, sung :

We, whose mystic arts can tell,
Or urge the fates of men,
Thus before the mortal heat
Impregnated with bane,
Place in effigy to pine
The foe of Lady Githa's line.

As thus the waxen form the hearth
With gradual drops imbues,
May his strength to parent earth
Descend in ceaseless dews,

Till, the land to free from thrall,
His crown and sceptre pile his pall.

Ghostly priests, which he retains
In throngs, to our dismay ;
Doctors skill'd, with all their pains,
Shall not his end delay.

With his semblance, in our power
Is now his speeding final hour.

Serpents! on the spell-fed fire
Your hoarded venom throw ;
Winds! imbued with pestilence dire,
Upon the embers blow.

To a speedy fate consign
The foe of Lady Githa's line.

Whoop! sisters, whoop! effectual work the spells!
The worsted draws! the mortal charm prevails.

Thus far the hags, with hate imbued,
Their incantations had pursued ;
When Githa scream'd,— Betray'd! betray'd!
Our spell 's divulg'd! and while she said,

A band in arms amid them flew,
And with their spells, the baleful crew
Secur'd, and forth to justice led :
And in that hour King Duphus' sickness stay'd.

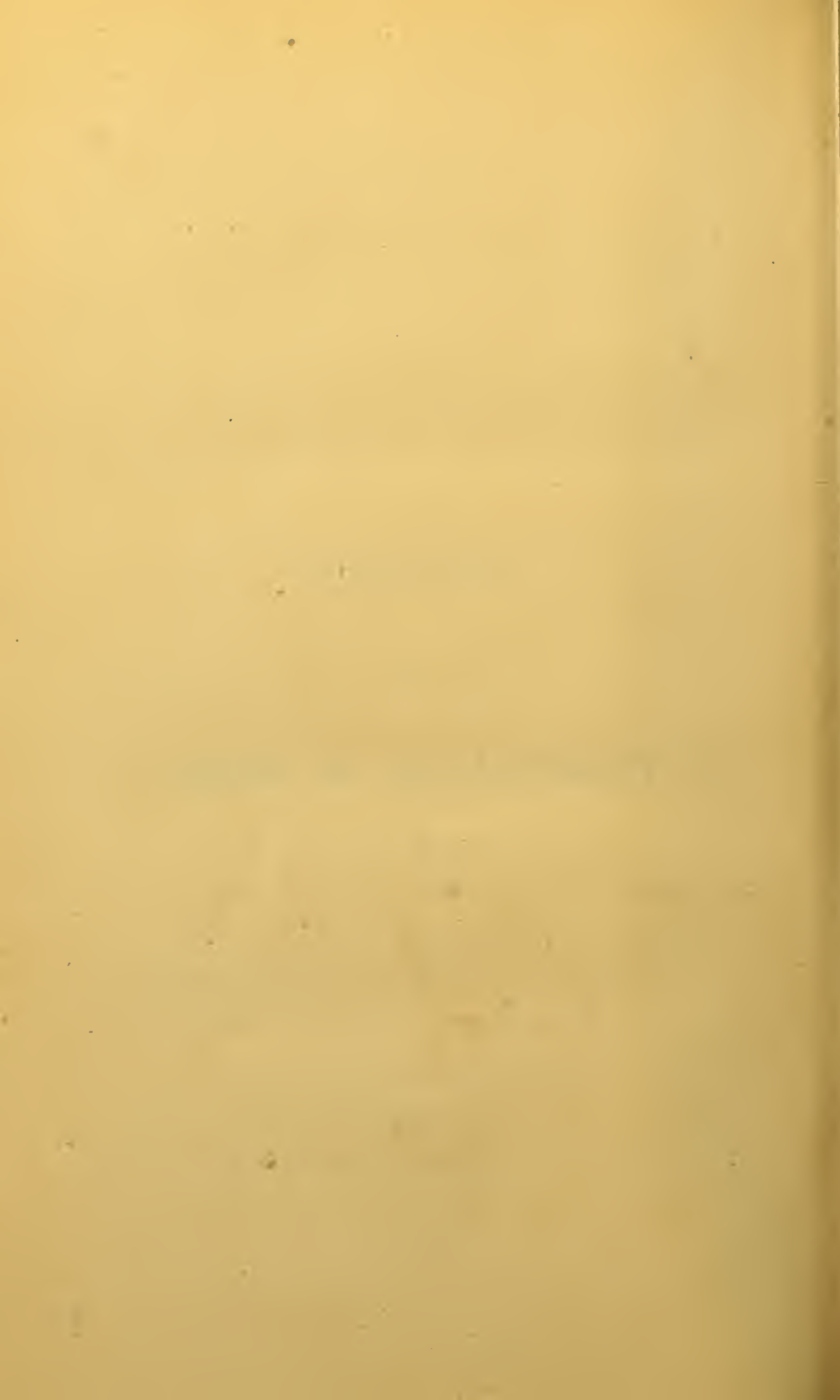
END OF THE WITCH OF FORRES.



SPECIMENS

OF A

VERSIFICATION OF OSSIAN.



SPECIMENS
OF
A VERSIFICATION OF OSSIAN.

FINGAL.

BOOK THE FIRST.

IN Tura's woods, now rustling in the leaf,
Sat great Cuchullin, Erin's guardian chief.
His ample shield lay on the verdure near;
And lean'd against a massy rock his spear:
As pass'd before his mind, in awful train,
His deeds in war, and mighty Carbar slain.
When, hark! a foot is heard, and now appears
The scout of ocean, Moran, pale with fears.
I see the ships of Swaran! loudly cries
Th' approaching herald,—rise, Cuchullin, rise!

In might in arms, and number, not to be
Computed, are the heroes of the sea.

How! Moran! calm the blue-eyed chief
replies,
Thou tremblest; in thy fears their number lies.
The king of lonely Morven may be near;
He comes to aid us; Moran, stay thy fear.

Not so! I saw their chief, the herald cries,
Tall in his armour, as a rock of ice;
That blasted pine can aptest semblance yield
His mighty spear, the rising moon his shield.
He sat upon a rock; their monarch round
Roll'd his dark host, like clouds that sweep the
ground.

When, on the duty of the bard, I press'd
Through many great, and thus the king
address'd.

Our hands in war are many, chief of men,
The forward spear on Ullin's shore is vain:
The mighty man, thy fame thee rightly calls,
But mighty men are seen from Tura's walls.

He answer'd, like a wave upon a rock,
When ocean's caverns bellow to the shock.
In Ullin, who shall Swaran's power withstand ?
To earth the mighty sink beneath his hand :
None lives who with the king of ocean fights,
But Fingal, king of Morven's stormy heights.
With him I wrestled once on Malmor heath,
Trembled the woods around, the rocks beneath,
Streams at our strife their wonted courses fled,
And at a distance heroes stood in dread.
Three days we strove : the angry fourth renew'd,
He says that Swaran fell ! I say, I stood !
Let dark Cuchullin yield to him who forms,
In battle's roar, the might of Malmor's storms.

No ! cried the chief, defiance on his head !
Let dark Cuchullin be renown'd or dead !
Strike, bard, the shield of Cathbait with the spear :
Fierce Swaran's taunts my warriors shall hear.

He struck the shield ; the deer from covert
fly,
Long to the rocks the echoing woods reply ;

Leaps Curach from the sounding rock ; and near
Arises Connal of the bloody spear.
The son of Favi leaves the hunted roe ;
High for the war beats Crugal's breast of snow ;
Ronnar to Lugar echoes the alarm !
Cry, battle, son of ocean ! Calmar, arm !
Lift the loud steel that to the stroke replies !
O warriors ! Puna ! dreadful hero, rise !
Cairbar ! arise from Cromla's ruddy tree !
O Eth ! from Lena bend the comely knee.
And Ca-olt ! to the shout of war beneath,
Stretch thy long side on Mora's whistling heath ;
Thy side that as the foaming wave is white,
When toss'd by winds on Cuthon's rocks to light.

Now the 'rapt bard the warriors can behold,
As to their memories rise their feats of old ;
In mind, as o'er again each battle bleeds,
Whilst flashes on their souls their former deeds ;
For, round the land as now their looks inquire
For Ullin's foe, their eyes are flames of fire :
Their mighty hands rest on their swords, and reel
The livid lightnings from their sides of steel.

As, big with rain, the mountain torrent fills
The steep, they roaring issue from their hills,
Glittering in arms. A dark and gloomy train
Their heroes follow ; as when clouds of rain
In volumes by the headlong tempest driven,
Rush after the red meteors of heaven.
The gray dogs howl the crash of arms among !
Wild and unequal bursts the battle-song !
All rocking Cromla sounds ! the pouring band
On Lena's dusky heath assembling stand,
Like mists which on the hills in autumn rise
Curling in bushy flakes upon the sky.

* * * * *

LATHMON.

A POEM.

Now silence reigns in Selma : now the morn
Hears not in Morven woods the hunter's horn.
At noon the sun in silence holds the plain ;
Roars on the rocks alone the tumbling main ;
When to the heights the dames of Morven go,
In beauty various as the watery bow ;
They look to Ullin for the king's white sails,
The north wind blows, and yet his promise fails.

Who are they from the eastern hills amain
That pour, like streams of darkness, on the plain ?
'Tis Lathmon's host ; that Fingal hence is far
He knows, and brightens at th' unequal war.

Why com'st thou, Lathmon, with the forward
spear ?

Dark Nuath's son ! the mighty are not here ?

Will Lathmon fight ? Shall Morven's daughters
know

To poise the spear, or bend the battle-bow ?

Yet in its course the mighty torrent fails ;

For valiant Lathmon sees not yonder sails !

Fly, Lathmon ! but, like mist from off the lake

Could Lathmon fly, the storm would overtake.

Now, o'er the dark blue deep to landward rose
Our ships, when Fingal starts from his repose,
And grasps his spear. (Each hero, rising, deems
The king has seen his father in his dreams ;
For, o'er the land when hung the threat'ning foe,
They to his slumbers oft descended so.)

Wind of the south ! the King of Morven cried,
Where in thy chambers, rustling, dost thou hide ?
Where, with the shower, in dalliance plays the
breeze

In other lands, to shun my sails and seas ?

Arm, Morven's heroes ! every mighty hand
Assume the spear ; the foe is in the land !
The dastard foe the heights of Morven gains,
Lathmon, that fled from us on Lona's plains,
Returns, like a collected stream, and fills
Our lonely vales ; and roars between our hills.

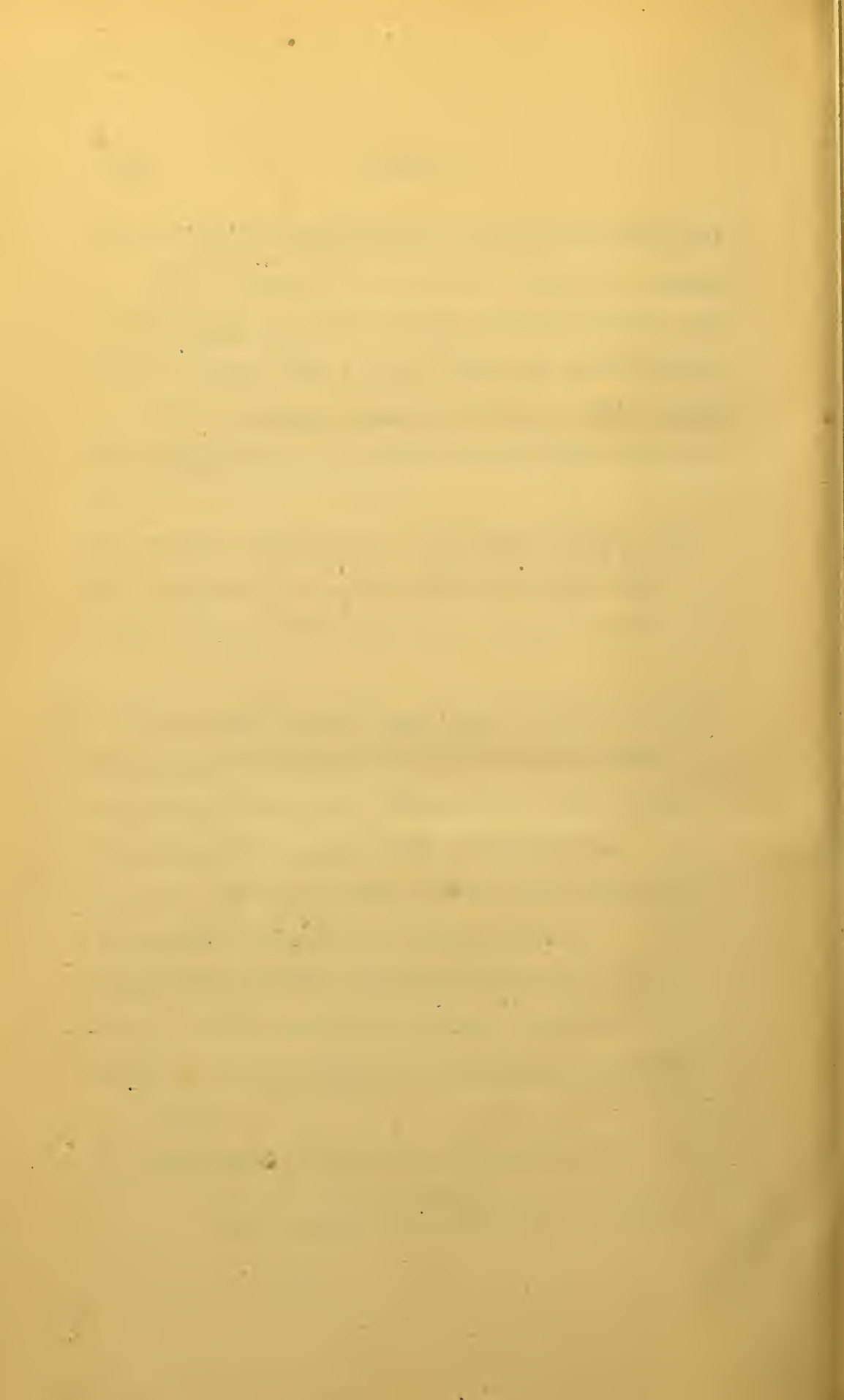
Thus spoke the king. * * *

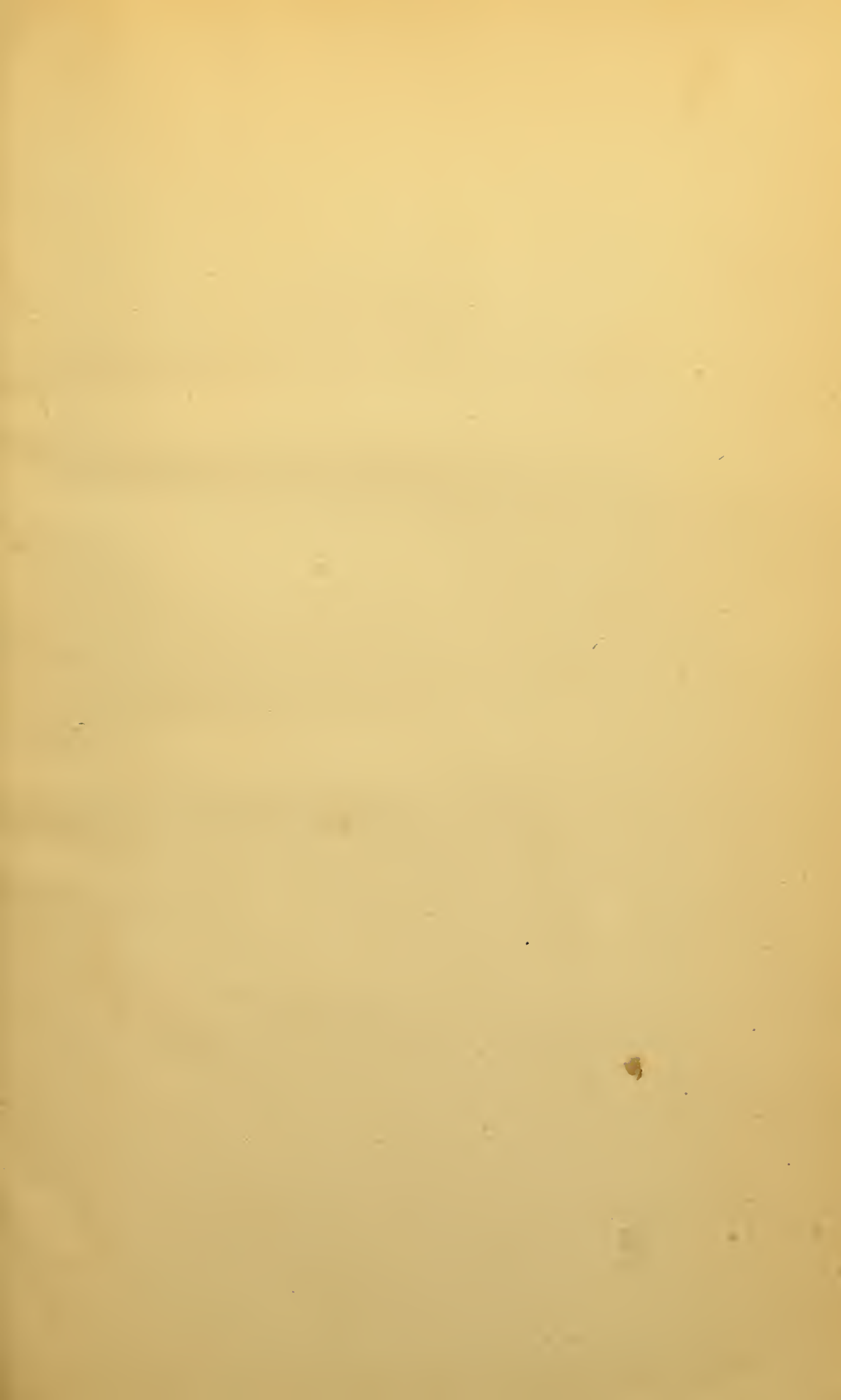
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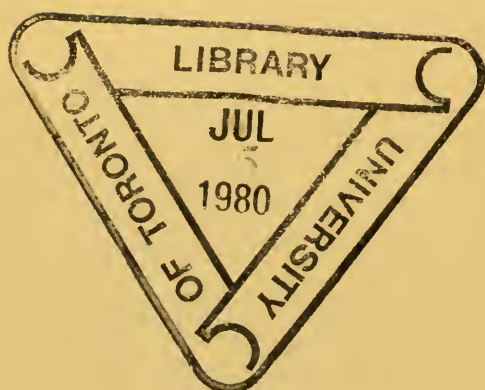
THE END.

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